CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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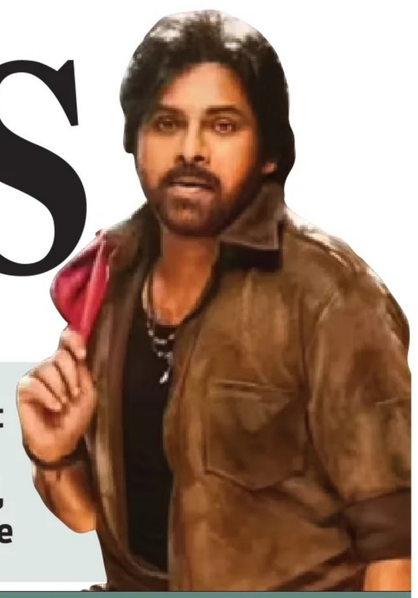
US strikes military assets on Kharg Island oil export hub **P8**

Centre warns against storing petrol in loose containers **P9**

P12 Ustaad Bhagat Singh Gets Benefit Shows, Ticket Price Hike



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US HAMMERS 'ORPHAN PEARL'

US forces carried out precision strikes on Iran's 'Kharg Island', hitting over 90 military targets after Trump warns Tehran over attacks on vessels in Hormuz. Though Trump called Kharg Iran's "crown jewel", it was dubbed many years ago as 'Orphan Pearl of the Persian Gulf'.

WASHINGTON

United States forces executed a large-scale precision strike on Kharg Island in Iran on Friday night, the US Central Command said on Saturday.

"US forces successfully struck more than 90 Iranian military targets on Kharg Island, while preserving the oil infrastructure," CENTCOM said.

The strike destroyed naval mine storage facilities, missile storage bunkers, and multiple other military sites, the U.S. military said in a post on X.

US President Donald Trump threatened on Friday to strike the oil infrastructure of Iran's Kharg Island hub unless Tehran stopped attacking vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, a warning that could further roil markets coping with a historic supply disruption.

Trump paired his Friday ultimatum with a social media post saying the U.S. had "totally obliterated" military targets on the island, the export terminal for 90% of Iran's oil shipments, which lies about 300 miles (500 km) northwest of the strait.

As the war entered its third week, Iran, however, struck a defiant note, playing down the extent of the damage on Kharg while threatening to step up its use of more powerful weapons and warning parts of the United Arab Emirates were a legitimate target.

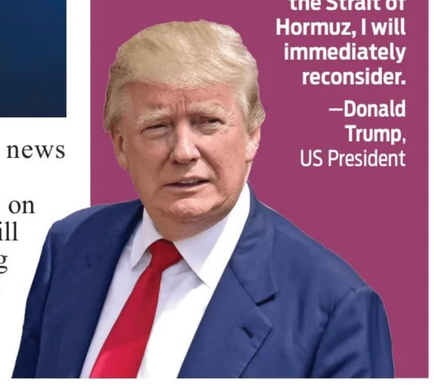
Oil exports from Kharg Island were continuing normally despite the U.S. attack, a senior provincial governor was quoted by the IRNA news agency as saying.

Trump told reporters on Friday the US Navy will "soon" start escorting tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, a conduit for 20% of the world's fossil energy supplies.

Trump calls on China, France, UK and others to send ships to keep strait of Hormuz open

I have chosen NOT to wipe out the Oil Infrastructure on the Island. However, should Iran, or anyone else, do anything to interfere with the Free and Safe Passage of Ships through the Strait of Hormuz, I will immediately reconsider.

—Donald Trump, US President



Why is the Kharg Island so important?

- The 5-mile-long coral island - twice the size of London's Heathrow Airport - is in the north of the Persian Gulf, 16 miles (26km) from Iran's coast and roughly 300 miles (483km) north of Strait of Hormuz, the vital waterway through which 20% of global oil flows, that Tehran has shut down.
- Kharg is the export terminal for 90% of Iran's oil shipments and has the capacity to load around seven million barrels a day.
- The island can handle as many as 10 supertankers at the same time, as its waters are deep enough to enable the docking of tankers that are too large to approach mainland Iran's shallow coastal waters.
- Before the war, the island handled most of Iran's roughly 1.7 million barrels of crude exports per day, with the majority of it going to China.

Iran's Kharg Island experienced 15 powerful explosions following a US military strike, according to Iranian media reports. The attacks targeted multiple strategic sites, including the Goshen naval base, the airport control tower, and the continental shelf helicopter hangar.

'Will bomb the hell out of the shoreline': Trump vows to reopen Hormuz

Donald Trump vowed the United States would use overwhelming force to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, warning that Washington would "bomb the hell out of the shoreline" if necessary to ensure the vital oil route remains open after Iran attempted to disrupt traffic through the waterway. In a post on Truth Social, Donald Trump said multiple countries affected by the disruption were expected to deploy naval forces alongside the United States to secure the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical oil shipping routes.

SHORTS FROM WAR FRONT

- US bombs Iran's key oil export hub
- US forces in UAE are 'legitimate targets' after Kharg strike: IRGC
- Intercepted 9 ballistic missiles, 33 Iranian drones since dawn: UAE
- French Prez Emmanuel Macron offers to host Israel-Lebanon talks
- Trump says Iran 'defeated', Hormuz escort 'very soon'
- US deploys additional Marines

- US bombs Iran's key oil export hub
- Israeli strikes since March 2 have killed 826 people: Lebanon
- 'Diplomatic avenues' available to stop war in Lebanon: UN

ISLAND STRIKE: IRAN THREATENS US 'HIDEOUTS' IN UAE

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has warned the UAE that US "hideouts" in the country are "legitimate" targets in retaliation to the US attack on Iran's Kharg Island.

An Iranian official ordered UAE residents to stay away from ports, docks and US military areas "to avoid any harm".

Some oil loading operations have reportedly been suspended at a port in the UAE after the interception of a drone caused a major fire. The fire at the port in Fujairah, a key oil storage and trading centre, occurred after debris fell during the interception of a drone, according to local media.

An Israeli strike killed a dozen medical staff at a clinic in the southern Lebanese town of Burj Qalaouiya, according to local health authorities. There was no comment from the Israeli military, but it said it carried out "several additional waves of attacks" against Hezbollah infrastructure in Beirut and southern Lebanon.

WAR WITH IRAN ENTERING 'DECISIVE PHASE': ISRAEL MIN

Israel's Defence Minister Israel Katz said on Saturday that the war with Iran was entering a "decisive phase" and lauded the US strikes on the military targets on Kharg Island oil export hub.

"The global and regional struggle against Iran, led by US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, is escalating and entering the decisive phase that will continue as long as necessary," Katz told military top brass in a televised statement as the war entered its third week.

INSIDE INDIA'S LPG CRISIS

Getting back on track? 'Commercial LPG sales start in all states, UTs'

NEW DELHI

Commercial LPG cylinder distribution has begun in all States and Union Territories, while authorities have stepped up raids and surprise inspections across the country to curb hoarding and black-marketing amid heightened pressure on cooking gas supplies, a senior oil ministry official said on Saturday.

Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, said panic booking continues to rise despite the fact that there are enough stocks available to meet domestic household requirements of cooking gas LPG. The Government has also asked OMCs to launch a campaign promoting digital booking of LPG refills and spreading awareness to prevent panic buying.

Diplomacy momentum

Two Indian-flagged ships carrying LPG from the Gulf countries have safely passed through the strait of Hormuz early on Saturday morning, raising the number of Indian vessels safely passing through the war-hit, narrow shipping lane to three.

After 2 sail through, India seeks safe passage for 22 vessels stranded around Strait of Hormuz amid energy crisis.

Two vessels carrying 92,700 metric tons of LPG en route to India.

Indian Navy escorts India-bound LPG tanker near Strait of Hormuz

NEW DELHI

Indian Navy warships have moved into the Gulf of Oman and are monitoring merchant traffic as tensions in West Asia continue to disrupt maritime movement near the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical energy corridors. Tracking data and satellite imagery circulated Saturday by OSINT expert Damien Symon said that the Indian-flagged LPG tanker Shivalik is currently sailing with naval ships in the vicinity after passing through the strategic waterway. "Three Indian Navy warships appear to have moved into the Gulf of Oman, likely to escort merchant vessels amid the tense security situation in the region. Ship-tracking data shows that the Indian-flagged LPG tanker Shivalik (IMO 9356892) is currently under escort," he said in a post on X. Sources in the Navy said Indian warships routinely remain deployed in the region as part of ongoing maritime security missions, including anti-piracy patrols and Operation Sankalp, under which the Navy maintains a presence to monitor sea lanes and assist commercial shipping when required. Nonetheless, monitoring of vessel positions has been complicated by electronic interference reported in the surrounding waters.

The two tankers, both owned by the state-run Shipping Corporation of India and chartered by Indian Oil Corporation, are transporting nearly 85,000 metric tonnes of liquefied petroleum gas.

'INDIA REALLY HELPED US'

The Iranian Ambassador to India, Mohammad Fathali, on Saturday (March 14) said, "The Indian government has really helped us" in providing assistance to Iranian ships that came under attack from the United States amid the ongoing conflict in West Asia. "The government of India, regarding these ships, really helped us. They accepted our request," he said,

'316 domestic cylinders used for commercial purposes seized'

At least 316 domestic LPG cylinders allegedly being used for commercial purposes across the state have been seized, the Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Department said on Saturday. Cases have also been registered against those involved. "Following the minister's (KH Muniyappa) instructions to take appropriate legal action if domestic cylinders are used for commercial purposes, cases have been registered under the Essential Commodities Act and seizures have been made across the state, including 45 in Peenya and 209 in Chikkajala of Bengaluru, 3 in Shivamogga district, 46 in Davanagere and 13 in Yadgir district," the department said in a release.

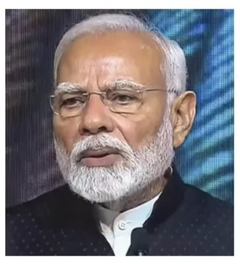
PM: Govt trying to minimise war impact, but Cong spreading panic

SILCHAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said war-like conditions and global tensions are affecting countries around the world, but the Centre is working to ensure that Indian citizens face minimal hardship.

Addressing a gathering after inaugurating and initiating various development projects in poll-bound Assam's Silchar, Modi said the priority of the government is to reduce the impact of the West Asia conflict on the people of India.

"Nowadays, conditions of war prevail all around the world. Our government is making every possible effort to ensure that the citizens of our country face the fewest hardships possible. Our objective is to minimise the impact of this war on the nation's citizens," the PM said.



Modi: Cong failed to act responsibly in critical times

He lashed out at Congress, saying the party had failed to act responsibly in a critical situation. "At this critical juncture, it was expected that the Congress party would fulfil the role of a responsible political entity. However, Congress has once again failed in this vital task concerning the national interest," Modi said.

He said the opposition was trying to create panic in the country. "The Congress is making every attempt to create panic within the country, hoping the nation gets entangled in difficulties, so that they can subsequently heap endless abuse upon PM Modi," he said.

LPG supply still a matter of concern, but no dry out: Centre

NEW DELHI

The Centre on Saturday said the "LPG remains a matter of concern at this time" but stressed that no distribution centre has reported any dry out, adding that there's a sharp uptick in "panic booking of LPG" amid West Asia conflict.

India is the world's second-largest buyer of LPG, 90% of which passes through the Strait of Hormuz, a key transit chokepoint where traffic has effectively come to a standstill.

The Centre underscored that crude oil supply is adequate, diesel and petrol are available. "There is an excessive amount of panic booking for LPG. Please book only when you actually need it," a top Ministry official told reporters.

The official said nearly 8.8 million (88 lakh) panic bookings have been observed.

The decision, said the official, regarding the supply of cylinders to commercial consumers will be taken in consultation with the respective state governments.

The official said that bookings for commercial cylinders have begun in all states.

Raids are being conducted continuously to curb black marketing of cylinders, the official said, adding that the state governments have a crucial role to play in this.

Wangchuk freed after 5 months of detention

LEH

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk was released from Jodhpur Central Jail on Saturday after the Union Government revoked his detention under the National Security Act with immediate effect.

As per reports, he was released from jail around 1.30 pm following an order from the Centre," Ratanada police station SHO Dinesh Lakhawat told reporters. Wangchuk's wife, Geetanjali Angmo, was present in Jodhpur to complete the formalities of his release.

Wangchuk was detained on September 26, 2025 under the NSA on the orders of the Leh district magistrate to "maintain public order", two days after protests in Leh demanding statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India turned violent. Four people were killed and more than 45, including 22 policemen, injured in the unrest. He was subsequently transferred to Jodhpur prison.

Earlier in the day, the Ministry of Home Affairs stated it had decided to revoke Wangchuk's detention after "due consideration", noting that he had already served nearly half of the maximum detention period allowed under the Act.

J&K CM urges release of youth in Valley

SRINAGAR: J&K CM Omar Abdullah on Saturday called for the release of young people detained in the Valley during protests against the killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei. He suggested that, as a goodwill gesture similar to the release of Ladakh activist Sonam Wangchuk, the cases against these youths should be revoked. "Given the sanctity of the holy month of Ramadan and Eid almost a week away, it would be in fitness that things similar to what was done to Sonam Wangchuk should be done in other places, do it here,"

QUICK READ

Mother, stepfather held for forcing 15-year-old into prostitution

Bengaluru

According to police officials, the disturbing incident was uncovered during an operation conducted by Chandralayout police. Investigations revealed that the girl's mother and step-father were directly involved in sending the minor to engage in illegal activities through a middlewoman. Police said the accused used to take the girl in their car every day and drop her at the house of the middlewoman. There, the minor was allegedly forced to meet customers and remained at the location until evening. The girl reportedly faced repeated exploitation by clients arranged through the intermediary. During the investigation, officers learned that the middlewoman fixed a price ranging from ₹6,000 to ₹10,000 for customers who sought time with the minor.

₹80 cr worth govt land reclaimed in anti-encroachment drive

Bengaluru

Authorities removed encroachments from approximately 13 acres and 20 guntas of government land during the operation. The land, located in and around Itakalpura village in Yelahanka taluk of Bengaluru Urban district, had reportedly been illegally occupied for some time. The eviction drive was conducted by the district administration along with revenue officials and local authorities. Officials stated that the operation was part of ongoing efforts to identify and recover government properties that have been unlawfully encroached upon. During the clearance process, structures and other illegal developments on the land were removed, enabling officials to take back possession of the property.

Residents, Hotels opt for alternative cooking methods amid LPG crunch

Bengaluru

The shortage of LPG cylinders in several parts of Karnataka, particularly in Bengaluru, has disrupted normal cooking operations in homes, restaurants and large hotels. As the supply of cylinders struggles to keep pace with demand, many consumers are now exploring alternative cooking solutions to ensure uninterrupted food preparation. Electric induction stoves have emerged as one of the most preferred alternatives. Retailers and appliance dealers in the city report a sharp increase in demand for induction cooktops over the past few weeks. Many households and food businesses see induction stoves as a reliable backup option when LPG cylinders are not readily available.

'Stop misusing domestic LPG for commercial purposes

The crackdown comes as part of the govt's effort to prevent misuse of subsidised cylinders

BENGALURU

According to the department, officials have conducted large-scale seizure operations in multiple districts, targeting establishments that were illegally using domestic LPG cylinders meant for household consumption.

The crackdown comes as part of the government's effort to prevent misuse of subsidised cylinders and ensure that domestic LPG supplies reach genuine household consumers.

In Bengaluru, officials carried out raids in several areas and seized a significant number of cylinders. In Peenya, authorities confiscated 45 domestic LPG cylinders that were reportedly being used for commercial activities. Similarly, in Chikkajala, officials seized as many as 209 cylinders during the inspection drives. The department stated that these cylinders were being used illegally by businesses instead of authorised commercial LPG cylinders.

The enforcement drive also extended to other districts. In

Yadgiri district, officials seized 46 domestic LPG cylinders that were being misused for commercial purposes. In Shivamogga and Davanagere districts, authorities continued their inspections and seized three cylinders in Shivamogga and 13 cylinders in Davanagere.

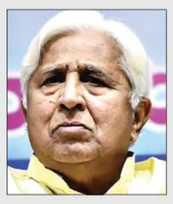
Meanwhile, in Kolar district, officials conducted a raid on an illegal LPG refilling unit operating in the KGF area. During the raid, authorities discovered that domestic cylinders were being illegally refilled and redistributed. A case has been registered against the individuals involved in the operation.

Officials said that all such violations are being treated seriously, and strict legal action is being initiated against offenders. Cases have been registered under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, and further investigations are underway to identify other illegal operations.

The department has urged businesses and individuals to strictly adhere to LPG usage regulations and avoid using domestic cylinders for commercial purposes. Authorities warned that enforcement drives will continue across the state, and anyone found violating the rules will face stringent penalties under the law.

K'taka govt steps in to help stranded foreign tourists

Due to ongoing geopolitical tensions and disruptions caused by the global conflict, international flight operations between several countries have been affected. As a result, many foreign tourists visiting Karnataka are facing difficulties returning to their home countries. Some travellers are also worried about the expiry of their visas and other travel-related complications. Responding to the situation, Karnataka Tourism Minister H.K. Patil assured that the state government is prepared to assist foreign visitors in every possible way. He stated that the department will provide guidance and necessary support to tourists facing visa management issues or other travel challenges. "Our department is ready to extend all required assistance to foreign guests, including help with visa management and resolving travel-related concerns," the minister said. The move is aimed at ensuring that tourists visiting the state do not face unnecessary distress during the ongoing global uncertainty.



LPG shortage puts K'taka hotel industry in crisis

Hotel operators across the state say the shortage of LPG cylinders has disrupted daily cooking operations, which are essential for running food businesses. Many hotels depend heavily on a steady supply of commercial LPG cylinders for preparing meals throughout the day. However, due to the current shortage, several establishments are finding it difficult to maintain regular services. Industry representatives warn that if the supply situation does not improve soon, some hotels may be forced to temporarily shut down. Without adequate fuel for cooking, preparing food items becomes nearly impossible, affecting both small eateries and large restaurants. The crisis has also created anxiety among workers employed in the hotel sector. Thousands of employees depend on hotels and restaurants for their livelihoods. If businesses are forced to close due to the cylinder shortage, many workers could lose their jobs, leading to financial hardship for their families.

New Smart Traffic System to Ease Congestion

BENGALURU

Bengaluru has launched an advanced smart traffic management system aimed at reducing congestion across some of the city's busiest corridors.

The initiative, introduced by the Bengaluru Traffic Police in partnership with the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), uses artificial intelligence and real-time data to optimize traffic signals and monitor road conditions.

Officials say the system has already been activated at major junctions including Silk Board Junction and KR Puram Junction—two locations known for heavy traffic during peak hours. Cameras and sensors installed at these intersections will track vehicle flow and automatically adjust signal timing to reduce waiting time.

Authorities believe the project could cut average travel delays by up to 20 percent if fully implemented citywide. Commuters have welcomed the move but stress that better public transport and stricter traffic rule enforcement are still needed to address Bengaluru's growing mobility challenges.

State approves ₹4,824 cr investment for 37 new Industrial projects

BENGALURU

The projects are expected to significantly boost industrial growth in the state and generate large-scale employment opportunities.

According to Minister for Large and Medium Industries and Infrastructure Development M.B. Patil, the approved projects are likely to create around 14,525 new jobs across various sectors.

The projects cover a wide range of industries including IT infrastructure, sugar manufacturing, technical textiles, compressed gas production, aerospace, jewellery manufacturing, electronics, software development and the construction of a five-star hotel. These investments are expected to strengthen Karnataka's industrial ecosystem while promoting regional economic development in multiple districts.

Among the major projects approved is Bagmane Constructions Private Limited's ₹494.65 crore investment for the development of IT infrastructure. Another significant proposal includes a ₹443.50 crore sugar factory project by Karnataka Bangaru Sugars. Clene Pax has received approval for a ₹376 crore technical textiles manufacturing unit, while Trishul Buildtech and Infrastructure will invest ₹300 crore in the construction of a five-star hotel.

In addition, Troutt Grass will establish a compressed gas production unit in Mudhol with an investment of ₹257.77 crore. Tsuyo Manufacturing will set up a unit to manufacture electric vehicle motors and controllers with an investment of ₹250 crore, further strengthening the state's push toward clean mobility and advanced manufacturing.

The committee also approved 22 major large and medium industrial projects involving investments exceeding ₹50 crore each. These projects alone will bring in investments worth ₹3,908.68 crore and are expected to create employment opportunities for about 12,475 people.

Additionally, 15 new industrial projects with investments ranging between ₹15 crore and ₹50 crore have been approved. These projects will attract investments of ₹350.60 crore and generate around 1,750 jobs.

Two expansion projects involving additional investments of ₹565.03 crore were also cleared during the meeting. These projects are expected to create employment opportunities for around 300 people.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary of the Commerce and Industries Department Dr. N. Selvakumar, Industries Development Commissioner Gunjan Krishna, Karnataka Udyog Mitra Managing Director Dodda Basavaraju and other senior officials. The approvals are part of the state government's efforts to attract investment and strengthen Karnataka's industrial development.

Bapuji Seva Kendras now offers caste, income certificate services

BENGALURU

The initiative aims to make essential administrative services more accessible to people living in rural and remote areas. With this move, residents will no longer need to travel long distances to Nadakacheris to apply for important certificates and documents.

Under the new arrangement, applications for caste certificates belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) can now be submitted directly at Bapuji Seva Kendras operating at the gram panchayat level. The decision is expected to simplify procedures and reduce the time and effort required for citizens to obtain official documentation.

Authorities said applicants must visit the nearest Bapuji Seva Kendra with the necessary supporting documents to apply for the certificates. The required documents include a ration card, Aadhaar card, voter ID card and school transfer certificate. Applicants may also submit a family lineage document issued by the village accountant, though this is optional.

For those applying for an income certificate, additional documents such as a salary slip or proof of income tax payment must be provided. Officials said these documents help verify the applicant's eligibility for the certificate. The process involves multiple verification steps to ensure authenticity. After the application is submitted at the Bapuji Seva Kendra, the Village Accountant will conduct a local verification and prepare a report based on the applicant's details and documents.

Following this, the report will be forwarded to the Revenue Inspector for approval. Once the verification process is completed and approved, the official certificate will be issued to the applicant.

Officials stated that the initiative will significantly benefit rural communities by improving accessibility to government services and reducing administrative delays.

Bengaluru Expands Electric Bus Fleet to Tackle Air Pollution

BENGALURU

Bengaluru took another step toward cleaner transportation on Saturday as the city added 150 new electric buses to its public transit fleet. Officials from the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) flagged off the buses at a ceremony attended by Karnataka transport authorities.

The move is part of the state government's broader push to reduce traffic emissions and improve air quality in the rapidly growing tech hub.

According to transport officials, the new buses will operate on high-demand routes connecting major areas such as Electronic City and Whitefield. Commuters welcomed the development, noting quieter rides and lower pollution. Authorities say the expansion could cut thousands of tons of carbon emissions annually while improving daily travel for thousands of passengers.

KSRTC relaxes rules for compassionate appointments

BENGALURU

According to the new circular issued by the corporation (No. 1749), the definition of "family" has been expanded to ensure that more eligible dependents of deceased employees can benefit from compassionate appointments.

The decision aims to remove earlier ambiguities in the recruitment process and provide fair opportunities to families facing financial hardship after the death of an employee.

One of the key changes introduced in the circular is the removal of restrictions based on marital status. Earlier, there were limitations on the eligibility of certain family members depending on whether they were married or unmarried. Under the revised rules, dependent daughters or sisters of the deceased employee will be eligible for compassionate appointments regardless of their marital status.

This means that unmarried, married, divorced or widowed daughters and sisters of deceased KSRTC employees can now apply for jobs under the compassionate appointment scheme. The move is expected to benefit many families where female members depend on the deceased employee for financial support. However, the corporation has clarified that the applicants must have been fully dependent on the deceased employee during their lifetime. They must also have been residing with the employee at the time, which will be a mandatory condition for eligibility.

To verify this requirement, applicants must submit a residence certificate issued by the concerned Tahsildar. The certificate must confirm that the candidate had been living with the deceased employee during their lifetime. KSRTC officials will consider this document during the recruitment process to verify the claim of dependency. The decision to amend the rules was taken during the KSRTC board meeting held on February 7, 2026.

Midnight Warehouse Break-In Leads to Arrest of Burglar

BENGALURU

Police arrested a 28-year-old man after a suspected burglary at a storage warehouse on the city's industrial outskirts. According to investigators, security alarms triggered shortly after midnight alerted guards, who noticed a broken side door and called authorities. Officers arrived within minutes and found the suspect hiding behind stacked crates inside the building. Police say several boxes containing electronic equipment had already been moved near the exit, suggesting an attempted theft. The man was taken into custody without incident and faces charges of burglary, property damage, and attempted theft. Authorities are reviewing surveillance footage to determine whether he acted alone. Warehouse management reported minor structural damage but said no inventory appears to be missing. Police urged nearby businesses to review their security systems and report any suspicious activity as the investigation continues. The suspect remains in custody pending a court hearing Monday.

GET SET TO BEAT THE HEAT

Heatwave grips parts of K'taka, mercury crosses 40°C

BENGALURU

According to weather officials, the northern districts of Karnataka are experiencing extreme heat conditions.

Districts such as Kalaburagi, Bidar and Yadgir have reported temperatures exceeding 40°C, placing the region under conditions similar to a "red alert."

Meteorologists have warned that hot and dry winds, commonly known as "loo," are likely to blow during the afternoon hours, increasing the risk of heat-related illnesses.

Authorities have also issued an alert regarding the ultraviolet (UV) index, which is expected to exceed level 10 between 12 pm and 3 pm. Experts caution that exposure to such intense ultraviolet radiation can cause significant harm to the skin and may lead to various health problems if proper precautions are not taken.

The approved projects are likely to create around 14,525 new jobs across various sectors, says MB Patil.

The combination of high temperatures, dry air and strong sunlight has made the heat wave particularly severe this season. Residents across the state have been advised to remain cautious, especially during peak afternoon hours when the intensity of heat and UV radiation is at its highest.

Health and weather departments have issued a set of safety guidelines to help people protect themselves from the scorching conditions. Citizens are advised to avoid stepping out unnecessarily between 11 am and 4 pm, when temperatures are at their peak. Staying hydrated is considered one of the most important preventive measures. Officials recommend drinking water regularly even if one does not feel thirsty.

Siddaramaiah promises medical college fulfillment in Bagalkot

Siddaramaiah promised timely compensation for Upper Krishna Project landowners, rejecting Bharatiya Janata Party claims of election gimmick

BAGALKOT

Siddaramaiah on Saturday said the State Government is committed to fulfilling the vision of late leader Siddu Nyamagouda Meti by establishing a medical college in Bagalkot district.

Speaking to reporters during his visit to Bagalkot, the Chief Minister said Meti had earlier proposed the establishment of a medical college in the region, and the present government is now taking steps to make that dream a reality. "Meti had a plan to build a medical college here, and we are implementing it as per his wish," Siddaramaiah said.

The Chief Minister also announced that compensation cheques would be distributed to farmers whose lands are being acquired for the third phase of the Upper Krishna Project. He said the government is ensuring that landowners receive compensation for their acquired land without delay. Responding to allegations made by leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party that the foundation stone laying ceremony for the medical college is merely an election gimmick ahead of the upcoming by-election, Siddaramaiah dismissed the criticism. He questioned why the BJP did not take steps to establish the medical college when it was in power. "If they call this a gimmick, why didn't they do it earlier? What is the gimmick in building a medical college that benefits the people?" he asked.

On the issue of the Bagalkot by-election ticket, Siddaramaiah said the decision will be taken by the party's high command. He acknowledged that members of the Meti family are among those seeking the ticket but added that there are several other aspirants as well.

"The elections have not been announced yet. They may be announced within a week. Anyone can seek a ticket, and the high command will take a final decision and give the ticket to one candidate," he said. He also noted that there is competition among aspirants, including members of the Meti family. The Chief Minister further spoke about the concerns surrounding LPG cylinder supply, stating that ensuring adequate supply is the responsibility of the Central Government. He said the State Government has already written to the Centre requesting necessary arrangements. "The responsibility of supplying cylinders lies with the Central Government. We have written to the Centre regarding this issue," Siddaramaiah added.

D.K Shivakumar Leads High-Level Talks On K'taka Water Projects

BAGALKOT

D. K. Shivakumar on Saturday said that a delegation of Karnataka leaders will travel to New Delhi to discuss issues related to the Upper Krishna Project and other water-sharing concerns with the Central Government.

Speaking to reporters at the helipad in Navanagar, Shivakumar said senior ministers, including M. B. Patil and Basavaraj Rayareddy, will accompany him to Delhi for the discussions.

He said a meeting has been scheduled at Karnataka Bhavan on Tuesday at 6 pm where the leaders will deliberate on the issues concerning the project and present Karnataka's concerns before the Centre.

Shivakumar stated that a request had earlier been submitted to the Central Government regarding land acquisition related to the project. He said the Centre has issued a notice seeking clarification on the matter. Despite this, he noted that development works worth around ₹26,000 crore under the Upper Krishna Project are already underway.

The Deputy Chief Minister alleged that authorities from Andhra Pradesh have been creating obstacles in the implementation of the project. According to him, Karnataka is facing difficulties in acquiring land required for the project due to objections from Andhra Pradesh.

Shivakumar said ₹26,000 crore Upper Krishna Project works continue despite Andhra Pradesh objections, noting the Centre sought land acquisition clarifications and Karnataka faces implementation obstacles

He also clarified that the height of the Almatti Dam has not yet been increased, although preparations are being made and related work is continuing.

Shivakumar further said that the issue is also linked to the management of water from the Tungabhadra River, alleging that Andhra Pradesh is not cooperating even in efforts to conserve and manage water resources.

He added that Karnataka's Members of Parliament at the Centre will also be involved in the discussions. "We will meet the concerned authorities in Delhi and discuss all these issues to protect the interests of the state," Shivakumar said.

LPG Cylinder Shortage: Black market price touches Rs 3,000

VIJAYAPURA

Severe shortage of commercial LPG cylinders in the state has pushed the hotel industry into crisis. In Vijayapura district, commercial cylinders are reportedly being sold in the black market for more than ₹3,000. Hotel owners say commercial LPG cylinders are essential for running their businesses. Due to the shortage, several hotels are struggling to continue operations, while some small eateries have switched to traditional wood-fired stoves. Hotel staff said that when they try to procure cylinders to run their establishments even for a day or two, suppliers are demanding up to ₹3,000 per cylinder in the black market. The shortage has forced many hotels in Vijayapura district to shut down temporarily. As a result, the number of tourists visiting the district has also declined. The impact is visible at the historic monument Gol Gumbaz, which used to attract thousands of visitors daily. With hotels remaining closed due to the LPG shortage, tourist footfall at the iconic site has reportedly dropped significantly.

Waqf inspector assaulted at Eidgah Committee office in Bidar

BIDAR

A Karnataka State Waqf Board inspector was allegedly assaulted at the Eidgah Committee office in Bidar, prompting police to register a case against four persons.

According to the complaint, Waqf Inspector A. Shahzan Ahmed had visited the Eidgah office at around 5 pm when a group of individuals allegedly abused him verbally and later physically attacked him.

The accused have been identified as Syed Sarfaraz Hashmi, Mirza Safi Ulla Baig, Niyaz Ahmed, and one unidentified person. During the assault, the inspector reportedly sustained injuries to his nose and shoulder and was later admitted to Bidar Institute of Medical Sciences (BRIMS) hospital for treatment. Sources said the incident was captured on CCTV cameras installed at the office premises, which may assist in the investigation. Police have registered a case and further investigation into the incident is underway.

Demand for vegetable market in Devara Hippargi

VIJAYAPURA

Members of Namma Karnataka Sena submitted a memorandum to the Tahsildar demanding the construction of a dedicated vegetable market in Devara Hippargi town of Vijayapura district.

According to the organisation, farmers from surrounding villages bring vegetables and other farm produce to Devara Hippargi and sell them on the roadside along the Vijayapura–Kalaburagi National Highway. Due to the absence of a proper market facility, farmers are forced to sell their produce in the open, braving heat, rain and wind.

They said the situation is risky as the busy highway sees constant movement of vehicles, forcing farmers to sell vegetables while risking their lives. Despite facing such difficulties, farmers continue to bring fresh produce to the town to support their livelihoods.

Leaders pointed out that farmers are the backbone of the country and deserve basic facilities to sell their produce. They stressed that establishing a proper vegetable market would greatly benefit farmers and improve safety.

Speaking on the occasion, Siddanagouda Patil, State Youth Coordinator of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha, along with Hasan Nadaf, urged the district administration to take immediate steps to construct a vegetable market in the town. They warned that if the demand is not fulfilled soon, members of Namma Karnataka Sena may stage a protest by blocking the national highway. Farmers of the taluk have appealed to the authorities to act promptly and provide a dedicated market facility.

MINISTER CRITICIZES UNION GOVERNMENT'S LACK OF TIMELY ACTION

BIDAR

Eshwar Khandre has held the Union Government responsible for the present situation and criticized it for failing to take timely preventive measures.

Speaking on the issue, the Minister said that the Centre should have anticipated the developments well in advance and made proper arrangements to avoid inconvenience to the public. He stated that both the Central Government and the concerned authorities were aware of the possible situation but did not take adequate precautionary steps.

Khandre said the failure to plan and act in time reflects a major lapse on the part of the Union Government. He urged the Centre to take immediate action to arrange sufficient supplies of gas, petrol and diesel from all available sources so that people do not face shortages. "If prompt measures are not taken now, the entire country could face a chaotic situation," he warned, adding that the Government of India must take responsibility and provide clear answers to the people.

KHARGE BLAMES CENTRE'S FOREIGN POLICY FOR FUEL CRISIS

BIDAR

Priyank Kharge has criticized the Union Government over the ongoing fuel and gas concerns, blaming the situation on what he described as failures in the Centre's foreign policy and preparedness.

Speaking in Bidar, Kharge said Congress leaders believe the current crisis is linked to the foreign policy approach of the government led by Narendra Modi. He questioned the Prime Minister's diplomatic engagements, pointing out that Modi had visited Israel shortly before the war and later expressed condolences to the leadership of Iran.

Kharge also criticized Hardeep Singh Puri, noting

that the Union Minister had earlier assured Parliament that India had sufficient fuel reserves. However, he said the subsequent increase in LPG prices and the imposition of the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) indicate that the situation may be more serious than what was initially communicated.

According to Kharge, shortages of LPG are reportedly affecting hotels, hostels and several industries. He said the government must first acknowledge the problem before it can effectively address the issue.

The Congress leader further alleged that central agencies such as the Income Tax Department, Enforcement Directorate and Central Bureau of Investigation are being misused for political purposes. Referring to the handling of the situation, Kharge said, "It has been two years now. We trusted you somehow. Whether you run it as a Boring Club or a Century Club, that is up to you. As I said earlier, we will listen and then take a decision."

YADGIR HOTELS STRUGGLE AMID COMMERCIAL LPG SHORTAGE CRISIS

YADGIR

The impact of the ongoing tensions involving Iran, Israel and the United States is beginning to affect small businesses in Yadgir district, particularly the hotel industry, as a shortage of commercial LPG cylinders has disrupted daily operations.

Several hotel owners in Yadgir said they are struggling to continue their services due to the limited availability of commercial gas cylinders. The situation has forced many establishments to cut down their menu items in order to conserve the little gas they have left.

At SVS Hotel, located opposite the Yadgir Central Bus Station, the management has stopped serving breakfast items such as dosa, puri and other popular morning dishes. Hotel authorities said these items require large amounts of gas for preparation, and due to the shortage they have been forced to suspend breakfast services for nearly a week.

The closure of breakfast operations has caused financial strain for the hotel. Currently, the establishment is serving only afternoon meals in an effort to manage the limited gas supply. Hotel staff said they have only one commercial LPG cylinder remaining, and if the shortage continues, even the meal service may have to be suspended.

The situation has also affected employees working in the hotel, particularly women workers who depend on daily wages. Shakuntala, one of the hotel staff members, expressed concern over the uncertainty. She said many employees have family responsibilities and loans to repay, and the closure of hotel services could severely affect their livelihoods.

Hotel owner Mahendra also voiced concern over the situation, stating that many small hotels in the district are facing similar problems due to the shortage of commercial LPG cylinders. Both the hotel management and employees have urged the authorities and gas supply agencies to immediately arrange sufficient commercial cylinders to ensure that hotels can continue functioning and workers do not lose their source of income.

Khandre orders advance measures against summer water shortage

BIDAR

A meeting of the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (KDP) was held at the Zilla Panchayat Hall in Bidar on Saturday under the chairmanship of district in-charge minister Eshwar Khandre. During the meeting, the minister directed officials to take advance precautionary measures in view of the possible drinking water shortage in the district with the onset of summer. He instructed the concerned departments to closely monitor the water situation and ensure that adequate arrangements are made to avoid inconvenience to the public. Khandre emphasized the importance of water conservation and asked officials to give top priority to protecting available water resources. He also directed authorities to inspect drinking water supply pipelines across the district and immediately repair any leakages or technical faults to ensure uninterrupted supply to villages and urban areas. The minister further instructed officials to remain alert and respond quickly to any issues related to water supply during the summer months. He said timely planning and coordination among departments would help prevent serious water scarcity in the district. Shilpa Sharma, Pradeep Gunte, Girish Babadole and officials from various departments were present at the meeting.

Early diagnosis key to improving life of Spondyloarthropathy patients

KALABURAGI

Early diagnosis and timely treatment can significantly reduce disability and improve the quality of life of patients suffering from Spondyloarthropathy, said senior physician G. Narsimlu, National President of the Association of Physicians of India.

Delivering the 5th Dr A. Shivashankar Oration, organised by the Dr P. S. Shankar Pratishthan at the lecture hall of KBN Teaching and General Hospital in Kalaburagi on Saturday, Dr Narsimlu explained that several conditions fall under the spectrum of spondyloarthropathies. These include Ankylosing Spondylitis, Psoriatic Arthritis, Reactive Arthritis, and Enteropathic Arthritis.

He said that unlike in the past, advancements in diagnostic technologies such as MRI Imaging and HLA-B27 test have enabled physicians to detect these conditions at an early stage and initiate appropriate treatment.

Dr Narsimlu also highlighted the role of biological therapies, lifestyle modification, regular exercise and physiotherapy in controlling disease progression and providing relief to patients. An alumnus of Mahadevappa Rampure Medical College, Dr Narsimlu and a former student of noted physician P. S. Shankar, stressed the need for greater awareness among physicians and the public. He said early medical consultation for persistent back pain, especially among young adults, is essential to prevent the progression of the disease. Chairman of API Karnataka Mahalingappa, who presided over the programme, said such academic interactions help physicians stay updated with the latest developments in medical science.

Senior physicians including Sangram Biradar and Shivaraj Alashetty, along with postgraduate students, were present. Speaking on the occasion, Dr Shankar briefly recalled the student days of Dr Narsimlu and his early medical practice in Gurmitkal in Yadgir district. The oration commemorates the legacy of A. Shivashankar, a respected medical professional, and aims to promote academic discussions on important medical advances. Secretary of the Pratishthan Narendra Badeshi welcomed the guests.

QUICK READ

Uniforms distributed to students in Hunsur

HUNSUR

Students of Bannikuppe Government Higher Primary School in Hunsur taluk received uniforms from Madilu Rural Development and Service Organization. The uniforms were handed out by its president, D. M. Triveni, who also serves as State Mahila Congress General Secretary. Speaking to reporters, Triveni said it is a small initiative to support rural children's education, adding that seeing smiles on children and parents is the real reward. Congress leader Prasanna Kumar, the school principal, teachers, and parents were present during the distribution, making it a joyful event for the school community.

Daughters perform father's last rites in Birur

CHIKKAMAGALURU

In a touching example of gender equality, two daughters performed the last rites of their father in Birur town of Kadur taluk in Chikkamagaluru district. The incident has drawn praise from the local community for challenging traditional norms.

B.S. Vishwanath, a member of the Bhavasara Kshatriya community, passed away recently. As he had no sons, his daughter Aishwarya stepped forward to perform the funeral rituals. She was supported by her sister and brother-in-law during the ceremony. Aishwarya carried the ritual pot on her shoulders and completed the traditional rites around her father's body before the cremation.

Chicken Gambling Racket Busted by Police

UPPINANGADY

Police registered a case against five people involved in an illegal chicken numbering operation at Shettikodi, Karaya village in Belthangady taluk. The raid, led by probationary IPS Ananya Srivastava of Uppinangady Police Station on March 13, seized four roosters, two chickens, an auto rickshaw, and Rs. 2,500 used for gambling. Those named in the case include Ankit of Mugera house, Yashodhar of Urudai, Shivappa of Mugera house, Karunakar Poojary of Mundi house, and Umesh of Madakkil house. Police confirmed the operation was conducted during an ongoing chicken game, highlighting their crackdown on illegal gambling activities in the area.

New Indira Canteen brings affordable meals to workers

The minister announced 16 Indira Canteens in Shivamogga, offering affordable meals to support poor and working people

SHIVAMOGGA

Minister for School Education and Literacy and District Incharge Minister S. Madhu Bangarappa urged working class and economically weaker people to make good use of the Indira Canteen that provides affordable and nutritious food. He was speaking after inaugurating a newly constructed Indira Canteen near Gandhi Circle in Holehonnur town on Saturday.

The minister said that a total of 16 Indira Canteens have been sanctioned for Shivamogga district and this is the 12th canteen under the Holehonnur Town Panchayat limits. He explained that the canteen scheme is aimed at helping poor and working people by offering quality food at very low prices. Snacks are available for Rs.5 while lunch and dinner meals are served for Rs.10. He appealed to the public to visit the canteen, check the quality of the food and support the initiative.

Speaking about education, the minister said that around 57 lakh children in the state are receiving hot meals, eggs and milk in schools. He added that officials should also taste the meals during visits to ensure quality and proper implementation.

He also announced that Holehonnur Government High School will soon be upgraded into a Karnataka Public School where students will receive free education from LKG to Class 12 under one campus. Facilities like transport, computers, skill training and arts education will also be provided.

Shivamogga Rural MLA Sharada Pooryanayaka said the Indira Canteen scheme is very helpful for poor and working people and must be maintained with good food quality. Several officials and local leaders attended the program.

Minister Assures No Cooking Gas Shortage

District In-charge Minister Madhu Bangarappa assured that there is no serious shortage of cooking gas in the district. Speaking to reporters, he said a special meeting with officials has been convened to review cooking gas supply and drinking water availability amid the intense summer. He added that steps will be taken to address possible water issues in some areas. The minister also said government schools and Kannada medium institutions will not be closed and efforts are underway to resolve pending demands.

Priyank Kharge demands clarity on LPG shipments

KALABURAGI

Karnataka Minister Priyank Kharge has raised concerns over the lack of clear information about liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) shipments passing through the Strait of Hormuz. Speaking to reporters on Thursday, he said it is uncertain whether the vessels carrying LPG have actually reached India or are merely Indian carriers navigating the strategic route.

Kharge questioned the claims of the Bharatiya Janata Party that safe passage had been guaranteed, noting there has been no confirmation from Iranian authorities. "If safe passage has been ensured, it is welcome. But why the delay in clarity?" he asked.He also cited a recent LPG-related incident in Punjab, where a 66-year-old man allegedly died while standing in a queue, highlighting the urgency of the issue. Responding to Union Minister Pralhad Joshi's accusation that the Karnataka government created an artificial LPG shortage, Kharge dismissed it as baseless.

Kharge challenged BJP claims of guaranteed safe passage, noting no confirmation from Iran and questioning the delay in clarity

"The State government neither produces LPG nor owns oil industries or distribution systems," he emphasized, pointing out that these are national assets under Union jurisdiction. He further challenged the Centre's use of the Essential Services Maintenance Act, asking officials to ensure that every consumer can order and receive an LPG cylinder within 24 hours. Kharge's remarks come amid growing public concern over LPG availability and delivery delays in the state.

K. S. Eshwarappa announced protests against a project threatening 16,000 trees, wildlife, and the Sharavathi valley

Protest planned against Sharavathi pumped storage project

SHIVAMOGGA

A night-long Dharani Satyagraha will be held in Shivamogga to oppose the proposed Sharavathi Pumped Storage project, which activists claim may seriously harm the environment. The protest will take place in front of Nehru Maidan from 9:30 a.m. on March 24 to 9:30 a.m. on March 25.Rashtrabhakti Balaga convener K. S. Eshwarappa announced the protest at a press conference. He said the project could lead to the cutting of more than 16,000 trees and may threaten wildlife living in the Western Ghats region. According to him, the area is home to rare species such as the lion-tailed macaque, Kalinga snake, Mangatte bird and many medicinal plants. Environmental groups fear that landslides, water pollution and drying of rivers may occur if the project proceeds.

Activists also raised concerns that around 18,000 tons of explosives may be used for underground tunnelling up to 1,800 feet deep. They warned that such heavy blasting could increase the risk of earthquakes and damage the natural balance of the Sharavathi valley. Environmental expert Dr. B. M. Kumaraswamy said some activists have approached the High Court regarding the project. The court has asked the State and Central governments to respond by June 10. Until then, he urged authorities not to begin any work in the valley.Another expert, Dr. Sripati L. K., said the project cost could rise from ₹10,500 crores to nearly ₹20,000 crores.

He suggested that battery storage systems, which have higher efficiency, could be considered as an alternative. Organizers said

around 500 people and several environmental groups are expected to join the overnight protest.

14 Women Honoured On International Women's Day

KUKANUR

Kukanur celebrated International Women's Day on Saturday with a special program recognizing the achievements of women across various fields. The event, organized jointly by Koppal District and Yalaburga Assembly Women's Congress and ARAM NGO, was held at B.V. Shettar Mangala Bhavan.

Speaking at the event, lawyer Mamata Rayareddy emphasized that women are not only the strength of families but also the lifeblood of the nation. She encouraged equal opportunities and respect for women for the overall progress of society, noting that patience and resilience are women's greatest strengths.

Lokayukta books Udupi Excise official over assets

MANGALURU

Lokayukta police have registered a case against Udupi Deputy Commissioner (Excise) T. M. Srinivas for allegedly possessing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income. According to officials, searches were conducted on March 11 at his house, office, and several other locations linked to him.

The investigation revealed that the officer allegedly owned assets worth ₹9.57 crore. Out of this, Lokayukta police said ₹8.69 crore is suspected to be disproportionate to his official income. Immovable properties, including six houses, were valued at around ₹6.9 crore.

Movable assets were estimated at ₹2.66 crore. These include ₹3.95 lakh in cash, gold ornaments worth ₹1.47 crore, vehicles valued at ₹17 lakhs, bank deposits of ₹25.75 lakh, and other items worth ₹72.68 lakh.

Officials confirmed that searches were carried out at 15 locations connected to the accused officer. Further investigation is underway to determine the sources of the assets and take appropriate legal action.

Hunsur gas cylinder delay worries residents

HUNSUR

Hunsur residents have been facing delays in receiving domestic LPG cylinders, causing worry among consumers, said Shravana, head of the Food and Civil Supplies Department.

Speaking to reporters, Shravana explained that many households had booked cylinders, but they had not arrived for several days. Gas agency staff are now personally delivering cylinders to homes that had previously booked them. Some customers using mobile bookings reported that their orders were not being registered by the agency. Officials confirmed that the delay was caused by a temporary software error, which is now being addressed. "This issue will not happen again," Shravana assured.

Meanwhile, Ustadvari Na Intiaz Ahmed of Indian Gas said that a slight delay had occurred in cylinder deliveries due to a server problem. "We are taking responsibility to load and deliver cylinders immediately after booking," he said. He added that this problem is not limited to Hunsur and similar delays are occurring in other areas as well.

Ahmed emphasized that the staff is working actively to Wensure home deliveries and that the server issue will be resolved in the coming days. Residents were urged not to worry, as all booked cylinders would be delivered promptly. The agency assured continuous monitoring to prevent further delays and maintain smooth gas supply in the city.

Dr. Siddarama Honkal unveils travelogue book

YADGIR

Yadgiri witnessed the release of the tenth travelogue by Kannada author Dr. Siddarama Honkal titled 'Dakshina Dhruvadin Uttara Dhruvake' at a Kannada pride event held at the Government First Grade College, Gurumatkal. The event was graced by the presence of Paramapoojya Guru Murugharajendra Mahaswamiji, while the college principal, Dr. J.V. Purushottam, presided over the ceremony.The book launch was conducted by distinguished guests, including Dr. M.S. Shirval, Sharana Sahitya writer Vishwaradhya Satyampete, Kannada department head Dr. Baburay Dore, and English lecturer Mahesh Chandapur.

Speaking at the event, Principal Dr. Purushottam highlighted Dr.

Lady Goschen Hospital dispute settled in Lok Adalat

MANGALURU

A long-pending dispute related to contractor payments during the construction of the new building of Lady Goschen Hospital was settled through compromise in a Lok Adalat held at the district court on Saturday.

The case involved dues to be paid by Nirmithi Kendra to contractors who had worked on the hospital project. Through mediation and discussion between both sides, the compensation amount was reduced to about ₹1.83 crore, instead of nearly ₹4 crores that was earlier claimed along with interest. The settlement helped save a large amount of public money and brought an end to the long legal dispute.The disagreement began during 2012-13 when construction of the new hospital building was taken up. Funds of about ₹21 crores had been sanctioned under the Corporate Social Responsibility programme of Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited for the project. Since advance funds were not available for government agencies to begin work immediately, the district committee decided to carry out construction through Nirmithi Kendra.

Tenders were invited for about ₹18 crores and the first contractor received the project for nearly ₹9 crores. However, the work was expected to be completed within two years but even after three years less than half the construction was finished.

Later, the then District Collector reassigned the work to another contractor, who completed the building and received payment.

Following the delay, the first contractor approached the court seeking pending payments and interest.

After legal proceedings, the matter was referred to Lok Adalat for settlement.

Fourth Additional District Judge Sridhar Gopalakrishna Bhat said the compromise benefited both sides and reduced the financial burden on the government, successfully closing the long-standing dispute.

TOBACCO GROWERS STRIKE

Farmers protest against falling tobacco prices in Hunsur

HUNSUR

Farmers and leaders of several farmer organizations staged a protest against ITC Limited near Ilavala on the Mysuru main road, accusing the company of paying very low prices for tobacco leaves. The protest was led by former MLA H. P. Manjunath, who said tobacco growers in the region are facing serious financial difficulties.Hundreds of farmers gathered outside the company office and raised slogans demanding fair prices for their tobacco produce. As part of the protest, demonstrators locked the entrance of the ITC warehouse to express their anger over what they called discrimination in tobacco procurement.Speaking during the protest, Manjunath said farmers depend heavily on tobacco cultivation for their livelihood. However, the sudden fall in prices at the Hunsur tobacco auction market has pushed many farmers into hardship. He warned that if justice is not given to farmers soon, stronger protests will be organized in the coming days.Mysuru District Congress Spokesperson M. Laxman also criticized the company, saying tobacco growers in the region are disappointed as prices have been falling continuously for the past one and a half months. He alleged that the company has failed to purchase tobacco properly from farmers despite repeated requests.Farmers said they trusted the company for many years but now feel cheated due to the low prices offered for their produce. They demanded immediate steps to ensure fair procurement rates and protect farmers' livelihoods.Several farmer leaders and activists including Nitin Venkatesh and J. Madev Ratnapuri David also participated in the protest along with a large number of local farmers.

DOMESTIC LPG SUPPLY NORMAL ASSURES DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

CHIKKAMAGALURU

Deputy Commissioner Nagaraj has assured the public that the supply of domestic LPG cylinders in the district is continuing smoothly and there is no need for people to panic.

In a press release, the district administration clarified that adequate stock of LPG cylinders is available and regular supply is being maintained through all authorized distributors. Officials said discussions have already been held with LPG distributors to ensure that domestic gas cylinders reach consumers without delay.Consumers have been advised to use cooking gas carefully and avoid unnecessary bookings. According to the guidelines, a new domestic LPG cylinder can be booked only after 25 days from the previous booking. Authorities requested the public to follow this rule and use gas sparingly according to the present situation.The administration also stated that LPG distributors in the district have been given strict instructions to supply cylinders directly to customers' doorsteps as usual.

QUICK READ

Students honored at English learning prize event

RAMANAGARA

A prize distribution program was held at Patel Public English School on Magadi Road near Kempegowda Circle in Ramanagara. The event was organized by Saral English Learning Institute, Bengaluru, and Chinthan Prakashan, Chitradurga, to encourage students in English learning and academic activities.

Founder Secretary of the school, Patel C. Raju, distributed prizes to the winning students. Speaking on the occasion, he said Kannada is the mother tongue, but learning English has become important in today's modern world. He noted that English helps students communicate at the state and national level and is essential for job seekers in many fields.

Priest dies as car hits electric pole

KOLAR

Lokesh (45), a priest from Gudipalli village, tragically died when his car collided with an electric pole near Baddipalli Cross in Srinivasapura taluk. The accident occurred after the driver lost control while returning home from a program. The incident was reported under the jurisdiction of Gaunipalli police station, and authorities are investigating the circumstances. Local residents expressed shock over the sudden mishap. Officials have urged drivers to exercise caution on roads to prevent similar accidents. The community mourns the loss of Lokesh, offering condolences to his family and prayers for his departed soul.

12 members elected unopposed to Sericulture board

SRINIVASPUR

Twelve candidates, including Shabbir Ahmed Pasha, were unanimously elected to the board of directors of the Kasaba Sericulture Growers and Farmers Service Cooperative Society in Srinivaspur taluk. The announcement was made by election officer Abid Hussain Saab after the nomination and withdrawal process concluded smoothly.

The election was conducted for a total of 12 seats on the society's governing board. Among these, 11 seats were reserved for the borrowers' category and one seat was reserved for the non-borrowers' category. The last date for filing nominations was March 11. After verification of nominations and the completion of the withdrawal period.

ARAI testing centre planned for Mandya development

The Union Minister announced Mandya's long-pending Khelo India indoor sports complex will begin construction soon after foundation laying

MANDYA

Union Minister H. D. Kumaraswamy said efforts are underway to establish a testing centre of the Automotive Research Association of India in Mandya district to promote industrial growth and create employment opportunities.

He was speaking after laying the foundation stone for a ₹14-crore indoor sports complex at VC Farm in Mandya on Saturday. Kumaraswamy said the process of setting up the ARAI testing centre is progressing at the national level, and once the land allotment letter is issued, a team of experts will visit the district to inspect the proposed site. He expressed confidence that the facility will benefit Mandya as well as nearby districts by generating jobs and boosting development.

The Union Minister said the demand for a modern indoor sports complex in Mandya had been pending for many years. With the foundation stone now laid, construction work will begin soon and the project will be completed quickly. The stadium has been sanctioned under the Khelo India scheme.

Kumaraswamy thanked Narendra Modi and Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya for approving the project and supporting development initiatives in the region.He also appreciated several companies including TVS Motor Company, Steel Authority of India Limited, Infosys, Hinduja Group and HMT Limited for supporting welfare activities through corporate social responsibility programs.

Through CSR initiatives, electric vehicles were provided to 388 differently-abled persons, computers were distributed to around 600 schools, and an ambulance was donated to Mandya Institute of Medical Sciences, benefiting the district.

Lok Adalat helps resolve disputes quickly: Judge

Ramalingegowda noted Lok Adalat settlements provide mutual agreement and peace, unlike courts, urging resolution of minor disputes patiently to reduce judicial burden amid declining joint families

CHIKKABALLAPURA

Principal District and Sessions Judge T. P. Ramalingegowda expressed concern over the decline of joint family systems and the growing number of cases being filed in courts for small disputes.

He was speaking after inaugurating the National Mega Lok Adalat held at the District Court in Chikkaballapura on Saturday. The judge said Lok Adalat provides a quick and peaceful way to resolve disputes through mutual agreement between both parties. Such settlements help people save time, money and repeated visits to court.Ramalingegowda explained that decisions given in Lok Adalat are different from regular court judgments because both sides willingly agree to the settlement. As a result, both parties get peace of mind and avoid long legal battles. He said that in earlier times joint families played an important role in solving disputes within the family itself. Elders would guide younger members and correct mistakes before they turned into serious problems.

However, with the decline of joint families today, even small misunderstandings are being taken to court, which increases the burden on the judiciary. He advised people to solve minor disputes with patience and understanding instead of turning them into legal cases.District Bar Association President Abhilash also spoke on the occasion and said that property disputes between siblings often damage family relationships. If such matters are settled within the family with fairness and trust, many court cases can be avoided.Several judges, lawyers and litigants from the district court participated in the National Mega Lok Adalat programme and encouraged the public to use this platform for resolving disputes peacefully.

The government implemented 2023 election promises, empowering women through Griha Jyoti, Griha Lakshmi, Yuvanidhi, and Shakti Yojana schemes

Guarantee schemes strengthening women lives says Minister

CHITRADURGA

Planning and Statistics Minister and District In-charge Minister D. Sudhakar said the State government's guarantee schemes have become a strong support system for women by improving their economic and social status. He spoke while inaugurating the International Women's Day program organized under Mission Shakti and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao at District Valmiki Bhavan in Chitradurga on Saturday.

The event was jointly organized by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat and the Women and Child Development Department. The minister said the government had promised people several welfare programs during the 2023 Assembly elections and has successfully implemented them with women at the center. Schemes such as Griha Jyoti, Griha Lakshmi providing ₹2,000 monthly, Yuvanidhi for youth and free travel through Shakti Yojana have increased confidence among women and improved their participation in family decisions.

He said Indian culture has always respected women, worshipping goddesses such as Adiparashakti and Chamundeshwari. Women, he added, are the guiding force that brings peace and stability to families and society. He also recalled the leadership of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who introduced many welfare programs for the poor.

Challakere MLA T. Raghumurthy said strong determination and education are essential for women's success. District Guarantee Scheme Implementation Authority Chairman R. Shivanna praised Anganwadi and ASHA workers for delivering government benefits to people.

During the celebration, free health checkups were conducted for women, former Devadasis were honored and awards were presented to talented children under the Hoysala and Keladi Chennamma Award scheme, highlighting the achievements and contributions of women in society today.

All religions spread peace says Minister Rahim

BIDAR

Municipal Administration and Haj Minister Rahim Khan said that every religion in the world teaches peace, brotherhood and coexistence, and none of them encourages discrimination among people.

He was speaking after attending an Iftar gathering organized by Amar Erolakar on the occasion of Ramadan at the premises of Prayavi Ayurvedic Medical College in the Kolar Industrial Area of Bidar city. The event was arranged as a symbol of harmony and unity among people of different communities.Addressing students and guests, the minister urged young people to follow the values of equality and brotherhood in their lives. He said that just like the sun and the moon provide light to everyone without discrimination, human beings too should live together peacefully without differences of caste, religion or community.Rahim Khan also pointed out that people breathe the same air and share the same natural resources, yet conflicts arise in society over caste and religion.

Congress blames centre for Yettinahole delay

CHIKKABALLAPUR: The long-pending demand for the third stage of purification of water in H.N. and K.C. Valleys, serving nearly 65 lakh people in Kolar, Chikkaballapur, and Bangalore Rural districts, remains unfulfilled due to financial constraints, Congress leader B.S. Rafiullah claimed.According to a press release, Rafiullah, vice president of the KPCC Minority Wing, accused the NDA-led central government of failing to release GST funds owed to Karnataka. He said around Rs 10,000 crore in central dues could have financed the purification work, estimated at Rs 4,500–6,000 crore. According to him, the state government alone cannot fund the project.

NGOs seek MLC seats, permanent grants

HUNSUR

Out of 650 voluntary service organizations operating across nearly 10,000 villages in 31 districts of Karnataka, two prominent individuals—one woman and one man—should be nominated as Members of the Legislative Council (MLCs), urged Dr. S. Srikanth, Director of the Deed Institute.Speaking to reporters, Dr. Srikanth explained that these individuals' education and experience could be used for the development of Karnataka. He said a formal letter had been sent to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh, and the Governor requesting action on this matter.He also highlighted the need for permanent annual grants for NGOs that have been serving rural areas effectively for over 40 years. While some community monasteries and public institutions already receive permanent funding, none of the 650 organizations has been included so far. Dr. Srikanth suggested that allocating at least Rs 200 crore from the annual state budget of Rs 4.5 lakh crore could empower rural communities, strengthen local democracy, and activate Gram Sabhas.He emphasized that such support would recognize the decades-long work of NGOs that operate primarily through donor contributions, helping accelerate rural development and improve governance at the grassroots level. The proposal aims to combine legislative representation with sustained financial backing for long-serving community organizations.

Bamul announces bonus, dairy farmers celebrate

RAMANAGARA

Dairy farmers in Ramanagara celebrated as Bamul President D.K. Suresh announced a bonus of Rs. 1 per liter for milk producers, marking a first in the cooperative's history. The announcement was made at the Bilgumba Milk Producers Cooperative Association, where sweets were distributed to farmers.The gesture was praised by dairy office bearers, cooperative members, and local Congress leaders, who congratulated Suresh for introducing a model of rewarding farmers directly. Traditionally, bonus payments were reserved only for employees, but this initiative extends benefits to farmers who form the backbone of the dairy sector.Speaking at the event, Youth Congress District General Secretary Santosh highlighted that the bonus, effective from April 1, 2025, will range from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 18,000 annually depending on milk production. He said the move demonstrates how leadership in both politics and cooperatives can directly support farmers.Bamul will also give Rs. 5,000 bonuses to outsourced employees and Rs. 15,000 to dairies, aiming to encourage higher milk production and retain farmers in the sector. Santosh called the incentive "a timely step to strengthen rural livelihoods and prevent farmers from leaving dairy farming."

GAS PETROL NORMALIZATION

Gas supply to stabilize soon says Parameshwar

TUMAKURU

Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwar said the supply of gas and petrol will soon return to normal as ships carrying fuel are already passing through Iran. He assured that the situation will improve soon and people will not face major difficulties.

Speaking to reporters during his visit to Siddaganga Mutt in Tumakuru, the minister said that the government is closely monitoring fuel supply. He added that some concessions have been given for Indian shipments, which will help ease the temporary shortage. At present, there is no major problem with domestic gas supply in the district. However, he admitted that a few hotels might face difficulties with commercial cylinders for a short period. He warned that strict action will be taken against anyone trying to hoard cylinders or sell them illegally in the black market.The minister also spoke about the Yettinahole project and said that a buffer dam will be built at Vaderahalli as planned earlier. According to the revised plan, the project will cover about 5,000 acres of land across Tumakuru and Chikkaballapur districts. He said the government will hold discussions with local residents who have raised concerns and try to find a suitable solution for them.

On government recruitment, he said preparations are being made to fill nearly 50,000 posts across departments, including about 8,000 vacancies in the police department. The recruitment process will begin after the government takes a final decision on internal reservation.The minister also reviewed the water situation in the district and said that water from the Hemavati reservoir may be released to ensure supply during the coming summer months.

IN THE COURT OF THE ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE AND JMFC AT DODDABALLAPURA
CMis.No. 81/2026
Petitioner: Sri.G.S.Hanumantha Gowda S/o Late Chikkasubbanna Aged about 66 years, R/at Subhashnagar, Someshwara Extention, Besides Basava Bhavan, Doddaballapura Town.
V/s
Respondent : Registrar of Birth and death The Tahshildar Doddaballapura Taluk. Doddaballapura.
PUBLIC NOTICE
Whereas the Petitioner has filed the above petition under Section 13 (3) And 14 Of Registration Of Births And Deaths Act, 1969 for seeking the death certificate of the father of by name **LATE HANUMAKKA W/O LATE CHIKKASUBBANNA who died on 14.05.2016** at Beedikere Majara Gandarajapura Village, Tubagere Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District.
In this regard it is hereby notice that whoever has interested in the said matter may appear in person or through an advocate duly authorized before the above said court **on 16.4.2026**. In default this matter will be heard and disposed off an ex-parte order.
Given under my hand and seal of the court on the day of **10.03.2026**
Advocate Karthikeya Yadav.G.N Opp Court Road, Rojipura, Doddaballapur Town.
By Order of the Court Chief Ministeral Officer Prl. Civil Judge & JMFC Doddaballapura

IN THE COURT OF THE ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE AND JMFC AT DODDABALLAPURA
CMis.No. 82/2026
Petitioner: Sri.G.S.Hanumantha Gowda S/o Late Chikkasubbanna Aged about 66 years, R/at Subhashnagar, Someshwara Extention, Besides Basava Bhavan, Doddaballapura Town.
V/s
Respondent : Registrar of Birth and death The Tahshildar Doddaballapura Taluk. Doddaballapura.
PUBLIC NOTICE
Whereas the Petitioner has filed the above petition under Section 13 (3) And 14 Of Registration Of Births And Deaths Act, 1969 for seeking the death certificate of the father of by name **LATE CHIKKASUBBANNA S/O LATE HANUMANTHARAYAPPA who died on 18.12.1976** at Beedikere Majara Gandarajapura Village, Tubagere Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District.
In this regard it is hereby notice that whoever has interested in the said matter may appear in person or through an advocate duly authorized before the above said court **on 16.4.2026**. In default this matter will be heard and disposed off an ex-parte order.
Given under my hand and seal of the court on the day of **10.03.2026**
Advocate Karthikeya Yadav.G.N Opp Court Road, Rojipura, Doddaballapur Town.
By Order of the Court Chief Ministeral Officer Prl. Civil Judge & JMFC Doddaballapura

IN THE COURT OF THE ADDL CIVIL JUDGE AND J.M.F.C AT DODDABALLAPUR
C.Misc.No. 80/2026
Petitioners: Smt. Rathnamma, D/o Late. Venkataramanappa T L W/o Muniyappa, Aged about 70 years, R/at, Mannarapura Village, Nandi Hobli, Chikkaballapur Taluk & District
V/s
Respondent : The Tahasildar, Doddaballapur Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District.
DRAFT PAPER PUBLICATION
The Petitioner has filed a petition for grant of death certificate of Lakshmamma, W/o Late. Venkataramanappa T L, was died on 05-08-1986 at her house i.e., Thubagere Village and Hobli, Doddaballapur Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District. As the Petitioner is the daughter of the deceased Lakshmamma,
If any person has right interest may appear before this Hon'ble court on 10-4-26 at Doddaballapur at 11:00 AM in person or through pleader to file your objections if any.
Take notice that in default in your appearance of the date before/above mention in the notice it will be heard and determine ex-party.
Given under by hand seal of the court on the day of 13.3.26.
By Order of the Court
Sheristhedar
Additional Civil Judge & J.M.F.C
at Doddaballapur
Advocate for service: Sri. Chandrashekar K, Advocate, Doddaballapur.

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact:
080-41209042

CHANGE OF NAME
It is for general information that I, E HARINI D/o K EALUMALEAI, Ex - wife of R.RAJIV, resident of R/o No-1396, Ground Floor, 35th Cross, 17th Main, 5th Block, HBRLayout, Bangalore, Karnataka-560043, declare that I got divorce from my husband videCourt Decree M C No. 66/2019 dated 05/07/2019. Further I have changed the name of myminor son R. ABISHAI aged 15 years and he shall hereafter be known as H. TALISH.

ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ರಾಮನಗರ ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕು, ಬಿಡದಿ ಹೋಬಳಿ, ಗಾಣಕಲ್ ಗ್ರಾಮದಲ್ಲಿ ವಾಸವಾಗಿರುವ ಜಿ.ಟಿ. ಮಹದೇವಯ್ಯ ಆದ ನಾನು ಈ ಮೂಲಕ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕರಿಗೆ ತಿಳಿಯಪಡಿಸುವುದೇನೆಂದರೆ,
ನಾನು ಮೇಲ್ಕಂಡ ವಿಳಾಸದಲ್ಲಿ ವಾಸವಾಗಿರುತ್ತೇನೆ. ರಾಮನಗರ ಟೌನ್, ವಾರ್ಡ್ ನಂ. 25, ಬೋಳಪ್ಪನಹಳ್ಳಿ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಗೆ ಸೇರಿದ ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮಮ್ಮ ಕೋಂ ಶಿವಣ್ಣ ಮತ್ತು ಮಂಜುನಾಥ್ ಎಸ್. ಬಿನ್ ಶಿವಣ್ಣನವರ ಬಾಬ್ತು ನಗರಸಭೆ ಖಾತಾ ನಂ. **1098/78** ರಲ್ಲಿ ವಿಸ್ತೀರ್ಣ ಪೂರ್ವ–ಪಶ್ಚಿಮ 25 ಅಡಿ, ಉತ್ತರ–ದಕ್ಷಿಣ 13 ಅಡಿಗಳುಳ್ಳ ಖಾಲಿ ನಿವೇಶನ ಮತ್ತು ಇದರಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಮಣ್ಣು ಗೋಡೆ ಮತ್ತು ಕಾಡು ಮರುಗಳಿಂದ ಕಟ್ಟಿರುವ ಜೋಡಿ ಮನೆ ಐಟಂ ಒಂದು ಜುಮ್ಲಾ ಎರಡು ಐಟಂ ಸ್ವತ್ತುಗಳು ಒಂದೇ ಕಡೆ ಇರುವುದರಿಂದ ಒಟ್ಟು ಸ್ವತ್ತಿಗೆ ಚಕ್ಕುಬಂದಿ: ಪೂರ್ವಕ್ಕೆ: ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ರಸ್ತೆ, ಪಶ್ಚಿಮಕ್ಕೆ: ರಮೇಶ್ ರವರ ಮನೆ, ಉತ್ತರಕ್ಕೆ: ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ರಸ್ತೆ, ದಕ್ಷಿಣಕ್ಕೆ: ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಹಳ್ಳ ಈ ಚಕ್ಕುಬಂದಿಗೊಳಪಟ್ಟ 1ನೇ ಪುಸ್ತಕದ ದಸ್ತಾವೇಜು, ನಂ. ಆರ್.ಎಂ.ಎನ್. **–1–00424/2014–15** ಸ.ಡಿ. ನಂ. ಆರ್.ಎಂ.ಎನ್.ಡಿ. **217** ದಿನಾಂಕ: **21–04–2014** ರ ಮೂಲ ಶುದ್ಧ ಕ್ರಯಪತ್ರ ಹಾಗೂ ಆಶ್ರಯ ಯೋಜನೆಯಿಂದ ನಿವೇಶನ ಹಕ್ಕುಪತ್ರದ ದಿನಾಂಕ: **13–12–2000,** ಮರಿಯಪ್ಪನವರ ಮಗ ರಾಜು ಹೆಸರಿನಲ್ಲಿದ್ದ ಮೂಲ ನಿವೇಶನದ ಹಕ್ಕು ಪತ್ರ ಹಾಗೂ ಅಂಕಯ್ಯನವರ ಮಗ ಗುತ್ತಲಯ್ಯನವರ ಹೆಸರಿಗೆ ಆಗಿರುವ ನಿವೇಶನ ಹಕ್ಕು ಪತ್ರವು ನನ್ನ ಬಳಿ ಇದ್ದು ಈ ಮೇಲ್ಕಂಡ ಮೂಲ ದಾಖಲೆಗಳು ಮನೆಯಲ್ಲಿಟ್ಟಿದ್ದು ಸರಿಯಷ್ಟೆ, ಮನೆಯನ್ನು ಬದಲಾಯಿಸುವ ಸಮಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಆಕಸ್ಮಿಕವಾಗಿ ಕಳೆದುಹೋಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಸದರಿ ದಾಖಲೆಯು ಹುಡುಕಿದರೂ ಸಿಕ್ಕಿರುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಸದರಿ ದಾಖಲೆ ಕಳೆದಿರುವ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಪೋಲಿಸ್ ಠಾಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ದಿನಾಂಕ: **20–02–2026** ರಂದು ದೂರು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಿದ್ದು, ಲಾಸ್ಟ್ ರಿಪೋರ್ಟ್ ನಂ. **2073079/2026** ಆಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಒಂದು ವೇಳೆ ಮೇಲ್ಕಂಡ ಮೂಲ ಶುದ್ಧಕ್ರಯಪತ್ರ ಯಾರಿಗಿದ್ದರೂ ಸಿಕ್ಕಲ್ಲಿ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡ ವಿಳಾಸಕ್ಕೆ ಅಥವಾ ಹತ್ತಿರದ ಪೋಲಿಸ್ ಠಾಣೆಗೆ ತಲುಪಿಸುವಂತೆ ಈ ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಯ ಮೂಲಕ ಕೋರುತ್ತೇನೆ.
ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಬೇಕಾದ ವಿಳಾಸ:
ಜಿ.ಟಿ. ಮಹದೇವಯ್ಯ,
ಗಾಣಕಲ್ ಗ್ರಾಮ ಮತ್ತು ಅಂಚೆ, ಬಿಡದಿ ಹೋಬಳಿ, ರಾಮನಗರ ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕು, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ.

QUICK READ

Delhi crime branch arrests wanted criminal

NEW DELHI

The Southern Range of the Delhi Crime Branch has arrested a proclaimed offender involved in at least 12 criminal cases, officials said on Saturday. The accused, identified as Harish alias Harsh Gupta alias Yadvender alias KD alias Kalu alias Harsh alias Yash Gupta alias Hars, 39, is a resident of Badarpur in southeast Delhi. Police said he was declared a proclaimed offender in a 2020 Arms Act case registered at Jaitpur police station. Acting on secret information on March 13, a special team led by Inspector Vijay Pal Dahiya conducted a raid near Vidya Memorial School in Molar Band Extension, Badarpur, and successfully arrested him.

Man beaten to death over parking dispute

KUSHINAGAR

A 30-year-old man was allegedly beaten to death with sticks following a parking dispute in Uttar Pradesh's Kushinagar district, police said on Saturday. The incident occurred on Friday evening in Bodarwar market when Govind Sahni was heading to buy vegetables near his home. Police said Subhash, a resident of a Dalit settlement in the area, along with family members, stopped Sahni and attacked him. His mother Subhadra found him unconscious and bleeding and rushed him to the Community Health Centre in Kaptanganj, where doctors declared him dead. Police have launched raids to arrest the accused and sent the body for post-mortem.

Newlywed woman disappears from bus stand

MORADABAD

In a strange incident in Uttar Pradesh's Moradabad district, a newly married woman went missing from a bus stand while her husband had gone to buy snacks for her. The incident happened on March 9 when Pritam Singh from Amroha was returning with his wife Rimjhim after bringing her from her maternal home following Holi celebrations. The couple got down at Bilari bus stand to change buses. Rimjhim asked her husband to buy pakodas from a nearby stall. When Pritam returned, the 18-year-old woman had disappeared. Police have registered a missing case and are checking CCTV footage and mobile phone location to trace her.

Disrespect to Prez was insult to entire tribal community: PM

The PM criticised alleged protocol breach during Prez Murmu's recent Bengal visit

KOLKATA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that the alleged insult to President Droupadi Murmu during her recent visit to West Bengal was an insult to the entire tribal community of the country.

Addressing a massive rally at the Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata, Modi said the incident showed disrespect towards a leader who rose from a tribal background to occupy the highest constitutional office in the country. The rally marked the conclusion of the Bharatiya Janata Party's "Parivartan Yatra" ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections in the state.

The Prime Minister accused the Trinamool Congress government of ignoring the development needs of tribal communities in West Bengal. According to him, the ruling party had repeatedly insulted and neglected tribal people.

The controversy relates to President Murmu's visit to Darjeeling district last week to attend the International Santal Conclave. Reports suggested there was a protocol issue when police denied permission for the originally proposed venue at Phansidewa and instead shifted the event to a smaller location at Gossaipur.

It was also reported that neither Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee nor any member of the state Cabinet was present to receive the President during the visit.

The Prime Minister said the development saddened the President and raised concerns about respect for constitutional offices.

Without naming the Chief Minister directly, Modi also criticised recent remarks made by her about political unity among communities.

He said such statements could create divisions in society. Banerjee, however, rejected the criticism and said the President was being influenced by the BJP.

The Prime Minister said the people of West Bengal would respond through the ballot in the upcoming Assembly elections.

Gujarat's ₹2902 cr budget for skills and labour welfare

GANDHINAGAR

The Gujarat government has allocated ₹2,902 crore to the Labour, Skill Development and Employment Department in the 2026–27 state budget to strengthen youth skills, improve job opportunities and enhance welfare for workers across the state.

KEY ALLOCATIONS

- ₹226cr for Namo Skill Mission
- ₹200cr for PM Setu ITI upgrade
- ₹200cr for Shramik Annapurna meal booths
- ₹150cr for Shramik Basera worker housing

Labour Minister Kunvarji Bavaliya announced the allocation during a press conference at the state Legislative Assembly on Saturday. He said the budget aims to support the vision of "Viksit Gujarat 2047" and contribute to the national goal of "Viksit Bharat 2047" and an Atmanirbhar India.

The budget aims to advance the long-term vision of 'Viksit Gujarat 2047' and contribute to national development goals.

Under the Namo Gujarat Skill and Employment Mission, ₹226 crore has been allocated to improve youth employability. The PM Setu Scheme has received ₹200 crore to upgrade Industrial Training Institutes through a hub-and-spoke model. Another ₹40 crore has been set aside for the Namo Kaushalya Laxmi Scheme, which encourages female students to join ITI courses. Women trainees will receive ₹15,000 for one-year courses and ₹24,000 for two-year courses.

The government has also expanded labour welfare programmes. ₹200 crore has been allocated under the Shramik Annapurna Yojana to open 300 new booths offering meals to workers for ₹5. The Shramik Basera Yojana has received ₹150 crore to provide affordable housing for construction workers. Additionally, ₹160 crore has been allocated to expand the Dhanvantari Arogya Rath programme by adding 50 mobile health units.

The state will also provide ₹3.5 lakh accident insurance support to construction workers in case of death or permanent disability. The Agariya Housing Scheme has received ₹25 crore to provide houses with solar panels and basic facilities for salt pan workers.

Officials said Gujarat has 559 operational ITIs with 2,18,516 seats and continues to expand skill training and employment initiatives across the state.

'HP BUDGET WILL FOCUS ON SELF-RELIANCE, WELFARE'

SHIMLA

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Saturday said the state budget to be presented on March 21 will focus on financial self-reliance while protecting welfare schemes and benefits for people.

Speaking to media persons in Shimla before a special pre-budget meeting at the state secretariat, the Chief Minister said the upcoming budget will not include cuts in social welfare schemes, salaries or pensions of government employees.

He said the government has been holding consultations with different groups while preparing the budget so that the state can gradually move towards financial stability and self-reliance.

Sukhu noted that Himachal Pradesh is facing financial pressure after the Sixteenth Finance Commission decided to stop the Revenue Deficit Grant that the state had been receiving for nearly 70 years.

According to him, this decision could lead to an annual loss of ₹8,000 crore to ₹10,000 crore for the state between 2026 and 2031.

The Chief Minister also said Himachal contributes significantly to the country's ecological balance but receives limited financial support in return.

He added that if the state were allowed to commercially use forest resources, it would not need such grants.

Sukhu further pointed out that the state receives only 12 percent royalty from hydropower projects operated by central public sector companies such as SJVN, NHPC and NTPC.

He said increasing the royalty share would strengthen the state's finances. Responding to political remarks from neighbouring states, the Chief Minister said claims about Himachal's financial condition were misleading.

सत्यमेव जयते
पेट्रोलियम एवं प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS

Fuel stocks adequate; Govt warns against panic buying

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas on Saturday assured citizens that petrol and diesel are adequately available at fuel stations across the country. The ministry advised people not to store fuel in loose or unsafe containers, warning that such practices can cause serious safety risks.

In an official advisory, the ministry said retail fuel outlets have been instructed to strictly follow safety guidelines while selling petrol and diesel. It also warned that strict action will be taken against outlets that violate the prescribed safety rules during fuel distribution.

Earlier, Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said there is no shortage of petroleum products in India despite tensions in West Asia affecting global energy markets.

He noted that the war-like situation in the Middle East has created challenges for many countries, but India has taken steps to maintain steady fuel supplies.

Shekhawat said some neighbouring countries are facing serious disruptions due to the situation.

However, he stressed that India's fuel supply remains stable because the government has expanded its sources for crude oil imports.

According to him, India earlier imported crude oil from about 27 countries, but the government has now signed agreements with nearly 40 countries. This diversification has helped ensure a stable supply of petroleum products.

The minister also said the government has put strict monitoring systems in place to prevent black marketing and hoarding of petrol and diesel during uncertain global conditions.

Vijay weighs Perambur or Tiruchy East to contest

CHENNAI

Actor-turned-politician Vijay is yet to decide the constituency from which he will contest the upcoming Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, with Perambur and Tiruchirappalli (East) emerging as the top choices.

Sources in his party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), said both constituencies are being seriously considered as Vijay prepares to contest his first Assembly election as a political leader.

According to senior party leaders, Vijay is likely to choose a relatively small constituency so that he can campaign across the State for other candidates of the party.

Perambur in North Chennai has become a strong possibility after Vijay reportedly hinted at it during meetings with party aspirants.

At one interaction, he asked leaders whether he should visit Perambur frequently, which sparked speculation about his potential candidature from the seat.

The TVK chief has been holding consultations with party leaders and aspirants since March 10 as part of preparations for the Assembly polls. Earlier, party cadres passed a resolution urging him to contest from Perambur.

Perambur is known for housing the Integral Coach Factory and has around three lakh voters with a socially diverse population. The constituency has mostly been a stronghold of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and its allies. In the 2021 elections, DMK candidate R. D. Shekar won the seat with a large margin.

The other option is Tiruchirappalli East, an urban constituency represented by Inigo Irudayaraj of the DMK. The final decision is expected soon as Tamil Nadu moves closer to the Assembly elections.

Kerala CM inaugurates new 5-storey health centre building

KANNUR

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Saturday inaugurated the new five-storey building of the Iriveri Community Health Centre at Chakkarakkallu in Kannur district. The facility was constructed at a total cost of ₹20 crore to improve healthcare services in the region.

Speaking at the event, Vijayan said Kerala has gained global attention for its achievements in the health sector. He noted that the state's neonatal mortality rate is around 5 percent, which is lower than the 5.6 percent reported in the United States. He added that Kerala's strong public health system played a crucial role during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Chief Minister said the state government has implemented development projects worth ₹500 crore in the health sector in Kannur district. As part of these efforts, 14 health institutions have been upgraded to Family Health Centres.

Highlighting reforms introduced since the Left Democratic Front government came to power in 2016, Vijayan said the Aardram Mission helped transform the public healthcare system and made quality treatment more accessible, especially for poorer sections.

The new health centre building was constructed with funds from multiple sources, including the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Rural Infrastructure Development Fund and state plan funds.

The facility includes an X-ray unit, pharmacy store, oxygen room, laundry section, ambulance parking and other service areas in the basement. The ground floor houses the emergency department, laboratory and physiotherapy services, while upper floors include outpatient departments, wards, dental and eye examination rooms, and other medical facilities to serve patients in the region.

LPG CRISIS

TN announces power subsidy to eateries for switching from LPG to electric stoves

CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. K. Stalin has announced a subsidy of ₹2 per unit of electricity for eateries that switch from LPG to electric stoves, following a shortage of LPG supplies in the state.

The decision was taken during a review meeting held at the Secretariat on Saturday to discuss the impact of the LPG shortage on industries and the food sector. Officials said the disruption was linked to tensions in the Gulf region after the United States and Israel launched a joint military strike on Iran, which later led to restrictions on ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz. To reduce the impact on restaurants, tea shops and cloud kitchens, the state government will offer the power subsidy for additional electricity consumed when they switch from LPG to electric cooking equipment. The subsidy will continue during the period of commercial LPG restrictions.

The government has also announced financial support for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises to purchase electric equipment such as stoves and heaters. Under the Unemployed Youth Employment Generation Programme, entrepreneurs can receive a 25 percent subsidy up to ₹3.75 lakh. The Tamil Nadu Women Entrepreneurship Development Scheme offers a similar subsidy up to ₹2 lakh for loans up to ₹10 lakh.

To ensure industries continue operations, factories that normally use LPG or CNG will be allowed to temporarily use alternative fuels such as kerosene, biomass and high-speed diesel. Meanwhile, the state assured that petrol and diesel stocks are sufficient for about one month and urged people not to panic or rush to fuel stations unnecessarily.

QUICK READ

6,000 kg Meth worth Rs 36,000 cr destroyed

SRI VIJAYA PURAM

The Andaman and Nicobar Police have destroyed over 6,000 kg of methamphetamine valued at about Rs 36,000 crore in the international market. Officials said the disposal was carried out in phases over nine months, from June 26, 2025 to March 12, 2026. The drugs were earlier seized by the Indian Coast Guard on November 23, 2024, after intercepting a vessel with six Myanmarese crew members in Indian waters near the islands. The meth, packed in around 1,500 packets, was later destroyed at the INHS Dhanvantri incineration facility in Minnie Bay under the supervision of a high-level drug disposal committee and senior police officials.

Lt Gen Syed Ata Hasnain sworn in as Bihar Guv

PATNA

Lt Gen (Retd) Syed Ata Hasnain was sworn in as the Governor of Bihar at a ceremony held at Lok Bhavan in Patna. Patna High Court Chief Justice Sangam Kumar Sahoo administered the oath of office and secrecy. The event was attended by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, members of his cabinet and several senior officials. Hasnain earlier served as Military Secretary of the Indian Army, where he handled senior-level personnel management. Before that, he commanded the Army's 15 Corps in Jammu and Kashmir. After retirement, he remained active in public life, serving as Chancellor of the Central University of Kashmir and later as a member of the National Disaster Management Authority.

Spreading panic amid war: Modi tears into Cong in Assam

He remarked that in such circumstances political parties are expected to act responsibly, but alleged that the Congress had failed to rise to the occasion.

SILCHAR

Addressing a public rally in Silchar, Assam, on Saturday, Modi said the central government is making efforts to reduce the impact of ongoing wars in different parts of the world on Indian citizens.

At the same time, he criticised the Congress party, accusing it of acting irresponsibly and trying to spread fear among people.

Modi said that when the world is facing conflicts, the government's priority is to ensure that the lives of citizens remain stable and secure. However, he alleged that instead of cooperating during such times, the Congress party is trying to create panic by spreading rumours and misinformation.

The Prime Minister also criticised the Congress for its past policies related to the Northeast region. According to him, the party ignored the development needs of the region for many decades.

He said the Barak Valley suffered due to decisions taken during the time of independence and partition, which cut off the region's access to the sea.

Modi claimed that Barak Valley was once known as a strong industrial centre but gradually lost its strength due to lack of proper attention and development under earlier governments.

He said that even though Congress ruled the country for many years after independence, the region did not receive the development it deserved.

He further accused the Congress of misleading the youth of Assam in the past, pushing them towards violence and unrest. In contrast, he said the Bharatiya Janata Party government is working to create opportunities and bring stability for young people in the state.

Modi said the BJP believes in focusing on areas that were neglected earlier and aims to bring development to every region. During the event, he also launched several development projects worth Rs 23,550 crore as part of his two-day visit to Assam ahead of the upcoming assembly elections.

Modi launches Rs 18,680 cr connectivity projects in Bengal

KOLKATA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday unveiled connectivity and infrastructure projects worth Rs 18,680 crore in West Bengal, saying the state is playing an important role in India's development.

During his visit to Kolkata, the prime minister laid the foundation stone for five sections of the 231-km four-lane Kharagpur–Moregram economic corridor. The corridor is expected to shorten travel distance by about 120 km and reduce travel time by seven to eight hours. The road will pass through several districts including Paschim Medinipur, Bankura, Hooghly, Purba Bardhaman, Birbhum and Murshidabad.

Officials said the corridor will connect major national highways such as NH-16, NH-19, NH-14 and NH-12, improving regional transport and strengthening connectivity across different routes.

Modi also laid the foundation stone for a 5.6-km four-lane Dubrajpur Bypass and new four-lane bridges over the Kangshabati and Shilabati rivers on NH-14. These projects are expected to improve traffic flow and road safety in the region.

In the railway sector, the prime minister flagged off the Purulia–Anand Vihar Terminal Express. He also inaugurated six redeveloped railway stations under the Amrit Station scheme, including Kamakhyaguri, Anara, Tamluk, Haldia, Barabhum and Siuri.

Two railway projects were also dedicated to the nation. These include the 16-km third rail line between Belda and Dantan and an automatic block signalling system between Kalaikunda and Kanimohuli in the South Eastern Railway zone.

Give BJP a chance to make Punjab drug-free: Shah

MOGA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday urged the people of Punjab to support the Bharatiya Janata Party in the 2027 Assembly elections, saying the party could help make the state free from drugs and corruption.

Speaking at a "Badlav" rally in Killi Chahlan village of Moga district, Shah said Punjab is currently facing several challenges, including drug abuse, increasing debt, religious conversions, corruption and the growing influence of gangsters. He also claimed that many industries are moving out of the state due to the present situation.

Shah strongly criticised the Aam Aadmi Party government led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann. He alleged that the administration is affected by corruption and described it as an "ATM" for party chief Arvind Kejriwal. According to him, the state government has not been able to resolve key problems faced by the public.

The Union minister said Punjab has already given opportunities to parties such as Indian National Congress, Shiromani Akali Dal and AAP to govern the state. Now, he said, people should give the BJP a chance to bring change and development.

He conveyed that under PM Modi's leadership, the BJP is equipped to deliver Punjab from the shackles of addiction, financial disarray, and lawlessness.

He also pointed out that the BJP earlier served as a junior partner in the state government with the Akali Dal, but this time the party aims to form its own government.

Shah added that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the central government has taken strong steps such as scrapping Article 370 of the Indian Constitution and reducing Naxal violence, and similar efforts could help tackle the drug problem in Punjab.

SHAH ATTACKS AAP GOVT IN PUNJAB

Chandigarh

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday criticised the Aam Aadmi Party government in Punjab, accusing it of pushing the state into corruption, drugs and crime. In a post on X, Shah said people of Punjab now want "badlav" or change. He alleged that the government led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann had failed to maintain law and order and that development had stalled. Shah said he was eager to meet people at the BJP's 'Badlav' rally in Moga. The rally is seen as the start of the Bharatiya Janata Party campaign for the 2027 Assembly elections.

TVK rules out alliance with NDA ahead polls

CHENNAI

The Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), led by actor-turned-politician Vijay, on Saturday rejected reports suggesting a possible alliance with the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Tamil Nadu. Party leaders said the reports about a potential electoral pact were only media speculation and had no basis.

TVK Joint General Secretary C T R Nirmal Kumar said there was no possibility of an alliance with the NDA. He stated that the party had already declared the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as its ideological opponent. Nirmal Kumar said rumours about negotiations were spreading through the media and social media, and party members should rely only on official announcements.

He clarified that a virtual meeting held with district secretaries on March 13 was meant to review the party's organisational strength and discuss possible alliance strategies, not negotiations with the NDA. He also questioned whether the BJP would accept Vijay as the chief ministerial candidate if such rumours were true.

Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu BJP president Nainar Nagenthran avoided giving a clear answer when asked by reporters about talks with TVK. Instead, he said his focus was on issues affecting people, including law and order and the safety of women in the state.

According to sources in TVK, district secretaries told party General Secretary N Anand during the virtual meeting that the party's chances of victory could improve if it contested elections with allies. However, the leadership has not announced any formal alliance plans.

The developments come as political parties in Tamil Nadu begin preparing strategies for the upcoming elections in the state.

Yogi attends massive religious gathering at Songal

KAITHAL

A large number of saints and devotees gathered in Songal village for a major religious event.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said a massive gathering of saints and devotees had assembled in Songal village after many years, highlighting the spiritual importance of the place.

Addressing a Dharm Sabha during a religious programme in Songal village in Kaithal district of Haryana, the chief minister said he felt honoured to attend the event and receive blessings from the saints present there.

Yogi Adityanath described the land of Songal as spiritually significant and said it had played an important role in preserving religious traditions for generations. According to him, gatherings of saints and devotees help strengthen India's spiritual and cultural heritage.

He said such events also bring together people from different regions and promote unity and harmony among devotees.

The chief minister appreciated the organisers and local residents for arranging the Dharm Sabha and Bhandara, which saw participation from many saints, spiritual leaders and followers.

The programme included religious discourses and a community feast where devotees joined prayers and spiritual discussions. Yogi Adityanath offered his respects to the saints and emphasised the importance of protecting and promoting India's rich spiritual traditions.

Hasnain thanks PM after Bihar oath

PATNA

Newly appointed Bihar Governor Syed Ata Hasnain on Saturday thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi after taking the oath of office at Lok Bhavan in Patna.

Speaking to reporters after the ceremony, Hasnain said he felt honoured to be entrusted with the responsibility of serving the people of Bihar. He expressed gratitude to the prime minister for nominating him to the constitutional post and said his priority would be the welfare and development of the state.

Hasnain also spoke about the importance of democratic values and public service. He said India is a strong democracy where governance is centred on the needs of the people. Referring to his earlier role in Jammu and Kashmir, he said being known as the "People's General" during his military service there was a great honour, and he hoped to bring the same approach to his new role.

The former Army officer arrived in Patna earlier in the week and was welcomed by senior administrative officials at the airport. His appointment has attracted attention in political and administrative circles.

Before becoming governor, Hasnain served nearly four decades in the Indian Army and held several important positions. Much of his service involved handling security challenges in Jammu and Kashmir.

Apart from his military duties, he was also known for promoting social initiatives in the region, particularly in areas such as education, sports and youth employment. These efforts aimed to encourage young people to pursue positive opportunities and remain connected with the national mainstream.

Observers believe his leadership experience and people-focused approach could bring a fresh perspective to governance in Bihar.

LPG crisis triggers migrant worker exodus from Kerala

KOCHI

A severe LPG shortage in Kerala has forced many restaurants and hotels to shut down, leading to a large number of migrant workers returning to their home states ahead of Ramzan and upcoming elections.

Industry representatives said many migrant workers from West Bengal and Assam have begun leaving early due to a lack of work after restaurants closed. With Ramzan approaching and assembly elections due in their states, many workers are choosing to return home sooner than expected.

G Jayapal, state president of the Kerala Hotel and Restaurant Association, said restaurant owners are trying to keep their workers, fearing they may not return until after the elections. He said many small restaurant operators are struggling to retain staff when their businesses remain closed due to the LPG shortage.

Jayapal added that most hotel and restaurant workers in Kerala are migrants from other states. While some establishments are trying to use alternative cooking fuels, smaller outlets are finding it difficult to continue operations.

According to Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development official Binoy Peter, nearly half of Kerala's migrant workforce comes from Assam and West Bengal. He said many workers in the hospitality sector have already started travelling home.

Train reservations to these states are already full, with long waiting lists reported. Experts say the current movement is also linked to workers wanting to vote in the upcoming assembly elections.

Labour suppliers say the shortage has already begun affecting workplaces. Shibin, owner of KLR Facility, said he earlier supplied 25 migrant workers to a mall in Thiruvananthapuram, but only five remain now. He said companies are temporarily hiring local workers until the situation improves.

RARE PLANT REDISCOVERY

Rare plant species rediscovered in AP after 189 years

ITANAGAR

Scientists from the Botanical Survey of India have rediscovered a rare plant species in Arunachal Pradesh nearly 189 years after it was last recorded. The discovery was made during a field survey in Lohit district, officials said on Saturday. The plant, known as Henckelia monophylla, had not been documented since the early 19th century. Experts say the rediscovery is an important addition to the botanical records of the Eastern Himalayas and highlights the rich biodiversity of the region.

Henckelia monophylla belongs to the Gesneriaceae family and is a perennial herb that usually grows in humid forest environments. Plants of the Henckelia genus generally have upright or slightly creeping stems and simple leaves that are ovate or lance-shaped. They produce flowers in small clusters along the stem, often with tubular or funnel-shaped structures and delicate colours.

The plant's fruits develop as elongated capsules that contain many tiny seeds, allowing the species to reproduce efficiently in favourable ecological conditions. Botanists say that such rediscoveries are rare and show the importance of continuous scientific surveys in remote forest regions.

Researchers believe that Arunachal Pradesh remains one of India's most important biodiversity hotspots. The state's forests and mountains are home to many unique plant and animal species that are still being studied and documented by scientists.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu congratulated the research team for the achievement. In a message shared on X, he said the rediscovery of Henckelia monophylla after nearly two centuries highlights the extraordinary natural wealth of the state.

Khandu added that such scientific findings contribute to global botanical knowledge and also remind people about the ecological treasures found in Arunachal Pradesh. He also extended his best wishes to the scientists for their continued work in studying and conserving the region's unique plant species.

QUICK READ

Ven students rake stir beyond campus after Maduro's capture

Santiago de León de Caracas

For years, student activism in Venezuela carried significant risks. Demonstrations were largely confined within university campuses, where limited autonomy offered a degree of protection. Those who attempted to protest on public streets faced the possibility of beatings, detention or even worse treatment by security forces. International bodies, including the United Nations, have previously condemned the use of torture against detainees in the country, citing methods such as electric shocks, asphyxiation and sleep deprivation. The atmosphere began to change after a U.S. military operation on January 3 that captured Maduro and transferred him to the United States to face criminal charges. The operation triggered political upheaval inside Venezuela and opened space for renewed civic activism, including protests led by students and civil society groups.

Explosion at Amsterdam Jewish school 'a deliberate attack': Mayor

Amsterdam

According to local authorities, the explosion occurred at a Jewish school located in an upscale residential neighbourhood in the southern part of Amsterdam. The blast damaged a rainpipe and left burn marks on the building's exterior wall, though the structural impact was relatively limited. Femke Halsema said the incident was being treated with the utmost seriousness by city officials and law enforcement agencies. She described the explosion as a deliberate act targeting the Jewish community and stressed that authorities would take immediate steps to strengthen security. Following the attack, the mayor announced that security measures at Jewish institutions across the city would be increased. These measures are expected to include additional police patrols and enhanced monitoring around schools, community centres and religious sites.

US STRIKES MILITARY ASSETS ON KHARG ISLAND OIL EXPORT HUB

Tehran threatens to reduce US-linked oil facilities in the region to a 'pile of ashes' if oil structures on the island are attacked.

WASHINGTON

United States President Donald Trump has said the country's military bombed military installations on Iran's Kharg island, warning the area's critical oil facilities could be next if Iran continues to block the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran, in turn, threatened on Saturday to reduce US-linked oil facilities to "a pile of ashes" if oil structures on the island were attacked, as the US-Israel war on Iran, now in its punishing third week, spilled over into a global oil price crisis already in the making.

US Central Command spoke later in the day of what it described as a large-scale precision strike. "U.S. Forces successfully struck more than 90 Iranian military targets," CENTCOM said.

State media outlet IRNA, citing a senior provincial official, said exports from the island were continuing normally despite the US attack.

Kharg island is where more than 90 percent of Iran's oil is exported. Crude oil prices have surged more than 40 percent since the war began.

Trump said on Friday that US forces had "totally obliterated" all military targets on Iran's Kharg island oil export hub, describing it in a social media post as "one of the most powerful bombing raids in the History of the Middle East". He provided no evidence of that.

The US president said he had chosen not to "wipe out" oil infrastructure on the Iranian island, for now.

"However, should Iran, or anyone else, do anything to interfere with the Free and Safe Passage of Ships through the Strait of Hormuz, I will immediately reconsider this decision," he added.

Iran drone strike triggers blaze at UAE's Fujairah port

DUBAI

The suspension occurred just hours after the United States carried out strikes on military targets at Iran's Kharg Island oil export terminal.

Industry and trade sources said some oil-loading activities at Fujairah were halted after the drone incident caused a fire at the facility.

The suspension occurred just hours after the United States carried out strikes on military targets at Iran's Kharg Island oil export terminal, further intensifying tensions between Washington and Tehran.

In response to the U.S. attack, Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned that American-linked assets in the United Arab Emirates could become legitimate targets. These include ports, docks and military facilities believed to be associated with U.S. operations in the region.

Fujairah holds strategic importance in global energy markets. Located outside the Strait of Hormuz, the emirate serves as a major outlet for the UAE's Murban crude oil exports. The terminal handles about one million barrels of Murban crude per day, equivalent to roughly one percent of global oil demand. However, it remains unclear how significantly the latest disruption will affect overall oil shipments from the facility.

According to officials from Fujairah's media office, the fire broke out after debris fell during the interception of a drone. Authorities confirmed that no injuries were reported in the incident, though emergency teams responded quickly to contain the blaze and secure the affected area.

The attack comes during a period of heightened instability in global energy supply. Earlier this week, the International Energy Agency warned that the world could be facing the largest oil supply crisis in history due to the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz. The vital shipping route along Iran's coast has seen severe disruptions since the United States and Israel launched airstrikes on Iranian targets on February 28.

The escalating conflict has already forced several oil-producing countries in the region, including the UAE, to scale back production. With tensions continuing to rise, markets are closely watching developments in the Gulf, where any further disruption could have major consequences for global energy supply and prices.

China courts Paraguayan lawmakers as Beijing seeks to undermine Taiwan ties

PARAGUAY

Paraguayan opposition lawmaker Leidy Galeano said a government-sponsored trip to China last year left a lasting impression on her, reinforcing the idea that Paraguay could be missing out on significant economic opportunities by maintaining diplomatic relations with Taiwan instead of Beijing.

Galeano, a member of the newly formed Yo Creo party, was part of a delegation that toured six Chinese cities on what participants described as an all-expenses-paid visit organized through the Chinese consulate in São Paulo.

Reflecting on the experience, Galeano said the scale of development she witnessed in China made her think about similar possibilities for Paraguay. She noted that Chinese officials repeatedly emphasized the economic advantages Paraguay might gain by shifting its diplomatic stance away from Taiwan.

According to individuals familiar with the visits, the trips included lavish banquets, stays in luxury hotels, and tours of prominent landmarks such as the Great Wall. Some Paraguayan lawmakers view these invitations as part of a coordinated campaign by Beijing to cultivate political support in Paraguay and encourage a diplomatic switch.

Despite its relatively small population of around 6.4 million and its landlocked geography, Paraguay holds strategic importance in the geopolitical contest between China and Taiwan. It remains Taiwan's last diplomatically in South America and one of only 12 countries worldwide that still formally recognize Taipei.

A decision by Paraguay to establish diplomatic relations with Beijing would represent a symbolic victory for China in its long-running effort to diplomatically isolate Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own territory. Over the past decade, several countries have switched recognition from Taipei to Beijing, shrinking Taiwan's list of allies.

China's outreach to Paraguay also reflects its broader ambitions in Latin America, a region where economic and political influence has increasingly become a point of competition with the United States. U.S. President Donald Trump has emphasized maintaining American leadership in the Western Hemisphere, setting the stage for a geopolitical tug-of-war over influence in countries like Paraguay.

N. Korea fires 10 ballistic missiles into sea amid US-S. Korea military drills

YEONCHEON

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the missiles were launched from an area near the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, at around 1:20 p.m. local time (0430 GMT). The projectiles were fired toward the sea off the country's east coast, a direction commonly used by North Korea during weapons tests.

Japan's coast guard also reported detecting what it believed to be a ballistic missile that landed in the sea. According to Japan's public broadcaster NHK, citing military sources, the projectile appeared to have fallen outside Japan's exclusive economic zone, indicating no immediate threat to Japanese territory.

The launches took place as U.S. and South Korean forces continued their annual large-scale military exercises in South Korea. Washington and Seoul describe the drills as defensive in nature and intended to strengthen their readiness against potential threats from North Korea. However, Pyongyang has historically criticized such exercises, viewing them as preparations for invasion and often responding with missile tests.

North Korea has conducted a wide range of missile tests over the past two decades as part of its effort to develop advanced weapons capable of delivering nuclear warheads. Analysts believe the country has successfully developed nuclear weapons and continues to improve its missile delivery systems.

Due to its nuclear and missile programs, North Korea has been subject to multiple sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council since 2006. These sanctions were designed to restrict the country's access to materials, technology and financial resources that could support its weapons development.

Despite the economic pressure created by these restrictions, Pyongyang has remained defiant and continued to pursue its military capabilities. Saturday's missile launches underscore the persistent security challenges in the region, even as diplomatic efforts and calls for dialogue occasionally emerge from both sides.

Russian missile strikes kill 4, damage energy infra in Ukraine

KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said the primary target of the strikes was energy infrastructure in the Kyiv region. He added that the attacks also damaged residential buildings, schools and businesses, highlighting the continued risks faced by civilians as the conflict enters its fourth year.

According to Zelenskiy, the assault extended beyond the capital region and affected several parts of the country, including the Sumy, Kharkiv, Dnipro and Mykolaiv regions. The attack involved a massive wave of around 430 drones and 68 missiles launched overnight by Russian forces. Ukrainian air defence systems managed to intercept and destroy most of the incoming

projectiles, limiting the scale of destruction in some areas.

Despite these interceptions, the Kyiv region suffered casualties and significant damage. Mykola Kalashnyk, head of the regional military administration, confirmed that the four fatalities occurred in the Kyiv region. He also reported that at least 15 people were wounded and damage was recorded in four separate districts.

Ukraine's energy ministry said the strikes and shelling also disrupted electricity supply in several areas. Consumers in six regions were left without power following the attacks on energy infrastructure and front-line locations, further straining the country's already fragile power grid.

In a message posted on social media, Zelenskiy warned that Russia may attempt to take advantage of global geopolitical tensions to intensify its attacks. He suggested that developments in the Middle East conflict could be used by Moscow to divert international attention while escalating military operations in Ukraine.

The Ukrainian president urged Kyiv's allies to increase the production and supply of critical air defence systems and weapons, stressing that stronger defensive capabilities are essential to protect civilians and vital infrastructure from ongoing Russian strikes.

SUDOKU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

	7	4	5			1		
6				7	9		3	2
9		2	1			7		
	5	7		8	3		2	1
8			9			4		
	9	1		5	4		6	8
5			8			2		
	2	6		4	7		8	9
7			2			6		

5	7	2	9	6	8	3	1	4
1	6	9	5	4	3	2	7	8
3	8	4	7	1	2	6	9	5
8	5	1	3	7	6	4	2	9
9	3	7	4	2	5	8	6	1
2	4	6	1	8	9	7	5	3
6	9	3	8	5	7	1	4	2
4	2	5	6	3	1	9	8	7
7	1	8	2	9	4	5	3	6

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

BEIJING'S 'HARASSMENT'

Booming Taiwan can well afford more military spending: Prez

CHIAYI

Speaking on Saturday during an event marking the 30th anniversary of Taiwan's first direct presidential election, Lai stressed that the island's booming economy provides the financial capacity to support the eight-year defence spending plan.

He said the additional funding is essential to improve Taiwan's military preparedness in the face of increasing pressure from China.

The proposed defence package, however, has faced obstacles in parliament, where opposition parties hold a majority. Lawmakers from the opposition bloc argue that the government has not provided enough details about how the funds would be spent and have warned they will not approve what they describe as blank cheques.

Lai reiterated his administration's determination to safeguard Taiwan's sovereignty and democratic system. He noted that the anniversary of Taiwan's first direct presidential election is a reminder of the island's democratic progress and the external pressures it has faced over the years.

That election in 1996 came during a period of intense tensions across the Taiwan Strait when China fired missiles into nearby waters in an attempt to influence the vote. The incident highlighted Beijing's opposition to Taiwan's democratic system and its claim over the island.

Lai said the defence plan also reflects the evolving global security framework, pointing to the United States' national security strategy, which emphasizes collective defence and burden-sharing among allies and partners. Taiwan's strengthened military capabilities, he suggested, would contribute to regional stability.

Taiwan's economic performance has provided strong backing for the government's argument that such spending is manageable. The island is a global technology powerhouse and the dominant producer of advanced semiconductors, a sector that has surged due to rising global demand for artificial intelligence technologies.

Driven by this tech boom, Taiwan's economy recorded its fastest growth in 15 years in 2025, strengthening the government's position that the country has the financial resources to invest significantly in national defence.

Prince Harry spokesperson brands new biography a 'deranged conspiracy'

LONDON

The claims appear in a new book by royal biographer Tom Bower, extracts of which were published in The Times.

Bower, known for writing several biographies about the British royal family, describes growing tensions within the monarchy following the high-profile 2018 wedding of Harry and Meghan.

According to the book, members of the royal family became concerned about the influence Meghan had on Harry. Bower alleges that Camilla, Harry's stepmother and the wife of King Charles III, once told a friend that Meghan had brainwashed Harry. However, Harry's spokesperson swiftly dismissed the claims, describing them as unfounded and conspiratorial.

Harry and Meghan, known as the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, stepped back from

their official royal duties in 2020 and relocated to California in the United States. Their departure marked a major turning point in their relationship with the royal family and has since been followed by a series of public disagreements, interviews and media reports detailing internal tensions.

Bower's book suggests that the rift between the couple and the rest of the royal family began shortly after their wedding. It claims that Harry's older brother, Prince William, and his wife Catherine, Princess of Wales were particularly concerned about Meghan's influence and saw her as a potential threat to family unity.

QUICK READ

India's $250 million line of credit helps boost yields at Kenya farms

New Delhi

Precision agriculture is helping millions of Kenyan small land holders boost yields as the country cuts fertiliser waste and spot nutrient gaps through satellite data, drones and AI tools, a new report has said, adding that a $250 million line of credit from India routed via EXIM Bank for hand tractors and smart irrigation is the game-changer for the country. An opinion piece from India Narrative, written by a Kenyan agronomist, said that satellite data from the Kenya Space Agency enables farmers to "monitor soil humidity, spot nutrient gaps and pinpoint pests with accuracy, cutting water and fertiliser waste by up to 30 per cent."

China fuel export halt raises concerns over Aus aviation fuel supply

Beijing

Australia's vulnerability to liquid fuel shortages and price spikes has intensified after reports that China has asked its oil refiners to halt fuel exports, raising concerns over aviation fuel supplies and potential disruptions to flight operations, according to a new report. The Conversation said in its report that development comes amid continuing uncertainty over the Iran conflict and its impact on global oil supplies. The Australian Financial Review reported that China had notified refiners to stop fuel exports, casting doubt over at least two cargo shipments bound for Australia, it said. At the same time, two transport ships were reportedly blown up in the Strait of Hormuz, increasing the likelihood that vessels may avoid the passage while the conflict continues.

S. Korea, Japan to hold policy dialogue on trade, supply chain

Seoul

South Korea and Japan agreed on Saturday to establish a regular communication channel between their industry ministries to better manage various trade, economic security and supply chain issues, Seoul's industry ministry said. The agreement was made at a meeting between South Korean Industry Minister Kim Jung-kwan and his Japanese counterpart, Ryosei Akazawa, held on the sidelines of the inaugural Indo-Pacific energy security ministerial meeting in Tokyo, according to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Resources. The two countries will comprehensively monitor and manage various economic issues, including trade cooperation, economic security, supply chains and mineral resources, through the envisioned policy dialogue amid a rapidly shifting global trade and geopolitical environment, the ministry explained

Centre warns against storing petrol in loose containers

NEW DELHI

In a post on social media platform X, the ministry stated that there is no shortage of fuel and that all petrol pumps across India currently have adequate stocks.

It emphasized that petrol and diesel are readily available at retail outlets nationwide and that supplies are being maintained regularly by oil marketing companies.

The ministry also cautioned consumers against storing fuel in loose containers or other inappropriate vessels, highlighting that such practices can pose serious safety risks. Officials stressed that petrol and diesel are highly flammable substances and must only be handled and stored using approved containers and safety protocols.

According to the ministry, an incident recently came to light at a retail outlet in Tamil Nadu where petrol was reportedly dispensed into a loose container. Authorities said this practice is unsafe and strictly against safety guidelines followed at fuel stations.

Following the incident, the petrol pump involved has been suspended and appropriate action has been initiated against those responsible. The ministry reiterated that fuel dispensing norms are designed to ensure the safety of both consumers and petrol pump staff, and any deviation from these guidelines will not be tolerated.

Authorities have also directed all petrol pump operators and dealers across the country to strictly adhere to prescribed safety standards while dispensing fuel. The ministry warned that violations of safety norms will attract strict action, including suspension or cancellation of operating licenses.

> The govt issued advisory, stating there is adequate availability of petrol and diesel and urged consumers not to engage in unsafe storage practices assured that petrol and diesel are sufficiently available at retail outlets across the country and urged consumers not to store fuel in loose or inappropriate containers due to safety concerns.

Earlier, the government had also appealed to the public to avoid panic buying of petrol, diesel, or LPG, reiterating that adequate stocks of fuel are available across the country. Officials clarified that there have been no reports of fuel dry-outs at any of the nearly one lakh retail outlets operated by oil marketing companies.

Iran allows Indian ships to pass through Strait of Hormuz, envoy cites historic ties

TEHRAN

Speaking at the India Today Conclave in New Delhi, Ambassador Mohammad Fathali confirmed that Iranian authorities had allowed Indian ships to transit the key maritime route amid heightened tensions in West Asia. However, he declined to disclose operational details such as the number of vessels granted passage or the duration of the arrangement.

"Yes, we have allowed, but let me not tell you how many. As an Ambassador of Iran to India, I will follow this issue in the future as well because Iran and India have historical relations. Of course, as an Ambassador, I have done my best. There was some delay, but it happened," Fathali said while responding to questions about the movement of Indian vessels through the strait.

His remarks come amid reports that two Indian liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) tankers have already been permitted to cross the Strait of Hormuz despite the ongoing regional conflict. The two vessels—Shivalik and Nanda Devi—are currently en route to India and are expected to arrive in the country within the next few days. Both ships are owned by the state-run Shipping Corporation of India Limited.

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most strategically significant maritime passages, serving as a critical chokepoint for global energy trade. Nearly 20 percent of the world's oil and gas exports pass through this narrow waterway connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.

Following the safe transit of the two LPG carriers, several more tankers are reportedly awaiting clearance to pass through the conflict-affected region after Iran granted safe passage to Indian-flagged vessels. Reliable sources indicated that more shipments may soon cross the strait under similar arrangements.

During his address, Ambassador Fathali also defended Iran's decision to target US military bases in several Gulf countries. He claimed that a Tomahawk missile, allegedly launched from a US base in the region, had struck a girls' school in Iran, resulting in the deaths of around 170 students.

"We have announced that you will not actually be touched... Your assets, whatever you have inside your country. But we asked them what we should do when one of our schools, including the children, was hit by American Tomahawk missiles," the envoy said. He added that while Iran respects neighbouring countries, it would respond by targeting American bases in the region if attacks continue.

The developments come amid escalating tensions in West Asia, raising concerns about the safety of international shipping routes and the stability of global energy supplies.

India's FTAs with targeted partners drive 92% trade growth

NEW DELHI

The report highlighted that India's trade growth with FTA partners has far outpaced its overall merchandise trade growth with the rest of the world, which increased by 41.5% during the same period.

Analysts attribute this surge to India's shift from a traditionally defensive trade policy to a more growth-oriented strategy focused on countries with strong trade complementarities.

According to the report, India's recent trade agreements are not speculative deals but are based on existing and rapidly expanding trade corridors that gained momentum during the post-COVID economic recovery. "India's recent FTAs are not speculative exercises. They are rooted in trade corridors that were already growing rapidly during the post-COVID recovery," the report noted.

The study also forecasts that India's trade with countries with which it has signed FTAs since 2021 is expected to more than double by 2030. This projected growth will likely be driven by deeper tariff reductions, improved services provisions, and increasing investments that could expand productive capacity across multiple sectors.

India's trade strategy has increasingly focused on partners where economic interests are aligned, logistics networks are efficient, and trade complementarities already exist. Instead of creating entirely new trade relationships, New Delhi has prioritised strengthening ties with countries where bilateral trade was already expanding.

As a result, the share of FTA partners in India's total trade basket has risen significantly—from about 11–12 per cent in FY21 to nearly 16.5 per cent in FY25. The report described this shift as a deliberate strategy to prioritise economies with high trade intensity and strong alignment with India's strengths in sectors such as manufacturing, energy processing, pharmaceuticals, services, and investment-led growth.

The report also highlighted the importance of India's FTA with the United Kingdom signed in 2025. The agreement has improved market access for Indian businesses, addressed barriers in services and professional mobility, and strengthened investment linkages in areas such as technology, finance, advanced manufacturing, and clean energy.

Akasa Air joins airlines imposing fuel surcharge amid Middle East crisis

NEW DELHI

After Air India and IndiGo, Akasa Air on Saturday introduced a fuel surcharge on its flights, following a rise in aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices amid evolving geopolitical developments in the Middle East.

In a post on X, the airline said the surcharge will range from Rs 199 to Rs 1,300 across its domestic and international routes.

The surcharge will apply to all bookings made from 12:01 am on March 15, 2026, while tickets booked before that time will not be affected.

"Given this impact, Akasa Air will introduce a fuel surcharge ranging from Rs 199 to Rs 1,300 on our domestic and international routes for all bookings made with effect from 00:01 hours on March 15, 2026," the airline said.

The carrier added that the fuel surcharge will be charged on a per-sector basis and will vary depending on the duration of the flight.

Akasa Air said the decision comes as aviation turbine fuel prices have risen significantly due to geopolitical developments in the Middle East. Fuel accounts for a substantial share of airline operating costs and directly affects industry-wide expenses.

Despite the increase, the airline said it remains focused on maintaining efficient operations and competitive fares.

"At Akasa Air, we remain focused on offering warm and efficient customer service, reliable operations and affordable fares while maintaining the highest standards of operational efficiency," the airline said.

The airline added that it will continue to closely monitor the operating environment and review the fuel surcharge periodically.

Meanwhile, IndiGo on Friday announced a fuel surcharge on both domestic and international flight tickets starting March 14. In a statement, the airline said the surcharge will range between Rs 425 and Rs 2,300 depending on the route.

Earlier, Air India and Air India Express also announced the introduction of a fuel surcharge on flight tickets. According to the airline group, a fuel surcharge of Rs 399 per ticket on domestic flights came into effect from March 12.

Sharp fuel price hike in Pak turns painful for millions ahead of Eid

LAHORE

The sharp increase in fuel prices in Pakistan are turning painful during Ramadan, when household budgets are already under strain because the rise in the prices of basic necessities disproportionately affects middle-class families, according to a new report.

The sharp Rs 55 per litre increase in fuel prices is sending ripple effects across the country, raising transportation costs, driving up food prices and putting additional burden on households during the holy month, said the Dawn report.

"The timing of the increase has, therefore, intensified public anger. Ramadan is traditionally a period when governments are expected to provide relief through targeted support for essential goods. Instead, households are confronting a cost shock that is quickly eroding purchasing power just as families begin planning for Eid expenses," the report lamented.

Moreover, the price hike impact is particularly severe for millions of daily wage earners and gig workers whose incomes are modest and uncertain.

Pakistan's heavy dependence on imported fuel makes domestic prices highly vulnerable to international shocks.

"Fuel prices are never an isolated economic phenomenon. In an import-dependent economy like Pakistan's, they act as a powerful transmission channel through which cost pressures spread across almost every sector," said the report.

Transport fares have begun rising across cities within hours of the announcement. For millions who rely on public transport or motorcycles to commute to work, this translates into an unavoidable increase in daily expenses.

The report further stated that households in Pakistan are confronting a cost shock that is quickly eroding purchasing power just as families begin planning for Eid expenses.

In Peshawar, the petrol and diesel price hike has pushed up commodity prices and inter-city travel costs, while petroleum dealers report a noticeable decline in fuel sales.

Meanwhile, in Karachi, the increase in petroleum prices has pushed up transport fares across several modes of travel, putting further pressure on already strained household budgets.

NEXT-GEN TERMINAL

PM Modi Inaugurates Adani's Haldia Bulk Terminal

AHMEDABAD

The newly-commissioned Haldia Bulk Terminal has been designed to handle dry bulk cargo with an annual capacity of 4 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA). Located on the Hooghly River, the fully automated terminal features direct rail connectivity, representing a major upgrade for bulk cargo movement through India's eastern ports.

Developed as a next-generation facility, the terminal introduces full mechanisation and advanced automation systems aimed at improving operational efficiency and reducing cargo losses. According to Ashwani Gupta, Whole-time Director and CEO of Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ), the project is expected to modernise bulk cargo handling in the region.

"The Haldia Bulk Terminal is a next generation facility that brings full mechanisation and direct rail evacuation to the Hooghly. By eliminating jetty dumping and lowering cargo loss through advanced automated systems, we are ensuring cleaner, safer and more sustainable operations," Gupta said.

He added that the terminal will play a critical role in strengthening industrial supply chains across eastern India, particularly in West Bengal, Odisha, and Jharkhand. The project aligns with Prime Minister Modi's broader vision of lowering logistics costs through modern multimodal infrastructure.

The east coast currently accounts for nearly 60 per cent of India's dry bulk imports, including key raw materials such as coal, bauxite, and limestone. Given its strategic location, Haldia serves as one of the most efficient maritime entry points for industries such as steel, aluminium, and power generation across the eastern region.

Industry officials believe the additional cargo-handling capacity will significantly reduce logistics costs and turnaround times for these sectors, improving the supply of critical raw materials to industrial hubs.

The terminal has been developed within the Haldia Dock Complex (HDC) of Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port in Kolkata under a 30-year concession agreement using the Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) model. The project was undertaken by HDC Bulk Terminal Ltd and completed within its planned construction timeline, beginning on July 14, 2023 and reaching commissioning readiness this year.

As part of the project, Adani Ports installed a 2,000-tonne Railway Wagon Loading System (RWLS) and developed a 1.54-kilometre dedicated railway line to enable direct ship-to-train cargo evacuation.

I-T Dept urges taxpayers to ignore erroneous 'significant transactions' emails

NEW DELHI

The Income Tax Department on Saturday asked taxpayers to ignore certain emails containing incorrect information about "significant transactions" sent during the ongoing Advance Tax e-Campaign for assessment year (AY) 2026–27. In a post on X, the department said it received reports from taxpayers that some emails included inaccurate transaction details. Acknowledging the issue, the department apologised for the inconvenience and thanked taxpayers for flagging the problem. Officials said the matter is being addressed with the service provider responsible for the communication system. Until the issue is resolved, taxpayers have been advised to ignore the earlier email communication related to the Advance Tax e-Campaign for AY 2026–27. The department clarified that such messages are only facilitative reminders for taxpayers to review financial information and ensure advance tax compliance. Taxpayers can verify their transaction details through the e-Campaign tab on the Compliance Portal available on the Income Tax e-Filing Portal.

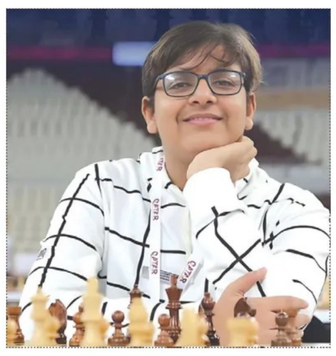
Teenager becomes first North East chess grandmaster

Sixteen-year-old Mayank Chakraborty from Assam becomes India's 94th Grandmaster, first from the North East region

CHENNAI

History was written on the chessboard as sixteen-year-old Mayank Chakraborty officially became India's 94th Grandmaster. Hailing from Assam, the young prodigy has achieved a monumental milestone by becoming the first player from the North East region to earn the prestigious title. His journey to the top culminated in a brilliant performance at the Young Talents tournament held in Sweden, where he dominated a field of international competitors.

Mayank secured his final requirement for the title with one round still to play. He clinched the status after defeating Philip Lindgren in the eighth round, showing nerves of steel far beyond his years. Not only did he earn the title, but he also went on to win the entire tournament outright. Finishing with seven points out of nine, he ended a full point ahead of his closest rivals from England and Norway. His live rating has now surged past the 2500 mark,



proving his elite status.

The chess world is buzzing over Mayank's "performance rating" of 2670 during the event, a score that reflects world-class play. This achievement is a proud moment for Indian sports, highlighting the growing talent emerging from every corner of the country. By breaking barriers for the North East, Mayank has turned into an overnight inspiration for thousands of aspiring players in his home state. As he returns to India, the teenager carries not just a trophy, but the dreams of a region finally represented at the highest level of chess.

JAIPUR POLO team gallops into major final

JAIPUR

The Jaipur Polo Team continued their incredible winning streak by crushing Jaigarh 6-2 in the Shree Cement Cup semi-final. From the very first whistle at the pitch, Jaipur displayed a masterclass in riding and clinical finishing. Maharaja Sawai Padmanabh Singh was the undisputed star of the show, firing in four goals to take his tournament total to ten. His teammate, Kr. Pratap Singh Kanota, set the pace early by opening the scoring and adding another to complete the dominant tally.

By the end of the first chukker, Jaipur had already raced to a 3-0 lead, leaving their opponents struggling to find any rhythm. Their superior teamwork and passing kept the pressure high, stretching the advantage to a massive 5-0 by halftime. Jaigarh attempted a brave comeback in the third period, showing more urgency and better coordination to find the net twice. However, Jaipur's defensive press remained solid, ensuring they kept a comfortable four-goal cushion heading into the final stages of the match.

The closing minutes were a controlled affair as Jaipur focused on keeping possession to protect their lead. This victory puts the team on the brink of their tenth trophy of an extraordinary season. Just days ago, they clinched their ninth title by narrowly defeating Krishna Polo 6–5.5 in the SMS Gold Vase final. As they prepare for the ultimate showdown, the Jaipur squad looks unstoppable. Fans are now eagerly waiting to see if they can reach that historic double-digit trophy mark.

Jaipur Polo Team dominated Jaigarh 6-2 in Shree Cement Cup semi-final, led by Maharaja Sawai Padmanabh Singh, staying on course for a historic tenth trophy

KKR HONORS LEGENDS WITH BOLD NEW THREADS

KOLKATA

The Kolkata Knight Riders are bringing their storied past to life this season. The three-time champions just revealed their fresh jersey for the 2026 IPL, and it is much more than just a uniform. Titled "Lines of Legacy," the new look uses the team's classic purple and gold to tell a deeper story.

Every stripe on the fabric represents a famous moment from the team's history. Fans will see artistic nods to Brendon McCullum's wild 158-run knock from the very first IPL game in 2008. There is also a tribute to Rinku Singh's incredible five sixes in a single over, a feat that still feels like magic. When you look closely, these special lines curve and blend together to form the letters KKR in a modern, abstract style.

CEO Venky Mysore explained that this design lets supporters literally wear the team's greatest memories on their sleeves. To get everyone talking, the club launched a funny social media film called "Kya Line Hai?" featuring actor Rajat Bedi and comedian Anirban Dasgupta. The video uses local humor to connect with the heart of Kolkata's passionate cricket fans.

By turning history into fashion, the franchise is bridging the gap between its legends and the new generation of players. As the purple brigade prepares for another big season, this jersey serves as a powerful reminder of the brilliance and grit that defined them. It is not just gear; it is a celebration of every roar from the stands.

Iconic cricket duo celebrates twenty five years

NEW DELHI

It has been exactly twenty-five years since cricket history changed forever at Eden Gardens. To mark this massive anniversary, batting legend VVS Laxman shared a heartfelt tribute to his partner, Rahul Dravid. He posted a classic photo online, remembering their incredible stand against Australia in 2001. Laxman called it a career-defining moment built on pure faith and teamwork.

Back then, India faced a terrifying Australian side led by Steve Waugh. The visitors had won sixteen matches in a row and seemed unstoppable. After India was forced to follow on in Kolkata, the situation looked hopeless. That is when Laxman and Dravid stepped onto the crease and stayed there. Together, they put up a staggering 376-run partnership that stunned the world's best bowling attack.

Laxman played a masterpiece, scoring 281 runs, while Dravid fought hard for a gritty 180. What makes this story truly human is the physical pain they endured. Dravid was battling a viral fever, and Laxman was struggling with a severe back injury. Despite the exhaustion, they batted through an entire day without losing a single wicket. Their bravery wore down the Australians and allowed India to declare.

In the final act, Harbhajan Singh and Sachin Tendulkar took crucial wickets to seal a miracle win. Today, that match is still whispered about as the greatest comeback in Test history. It reminds every fan that no matter how dark the scoreboard looks, patience and a good friend can turn the tide of any game.

Alcaraz shines as Svitolina stuns tennis world

CALIFORNIA

The Indian Wells Open reached a fever pitch as the world's top tennis stars collided in a series of high-stakes matches. World number one Carlos Alcaraz led the charge, delivering a masterclass performance to secure his spot in the semi-finals. The Spanish sensation dispatched Britain's Cameron Norrie in straight sets, winning 6-3, 6-4. Alcaraz showed incredible poise, controlling every rally and playing with massive confidence during the most critical moments of the game.

He is now set for a blockbuster semi-final clash against former champion Daniil Medvedev. The Russian star earned his place by defeating Jack Draper 6-1, 7-5. Meanwhile, Germany's Alexander Zverev and Italy's Jannik Sinner also moved forward. Sinner was particularly dominant, crushing American Learner Tien 6-1, 6-2 to round out a star-studded men's final four.

The women's draw provided even more drama as Elina Svitolina pulled off a massive upset. She defeated former world number one Iga Swiatek in a thrilling three-set battle that ended 6-2, 4-6, 6-4. While top seed Aryna Sabalenka managed to survive a tough challenge from Canada's Victoria Mboko, the spotlight remained on Svitolina's grit. Other winners included Linda Noskova and Elena Rybakina, who both showed championship form.

This tournament has been full of surprises, starting earlier this week when Jack Draper shocked the legendary Novak Djokovic. As the semi-finals approach, the energy in California is electric, with fans eager to see if the young guns can keep up this incredible momentum toward the trophy.

Soukouna strikes late to grab dramatic win

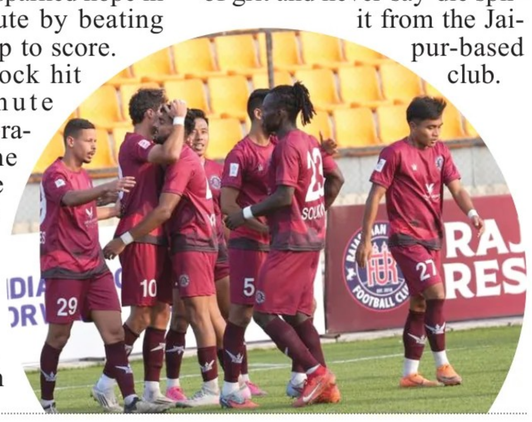
JAIPUR

Rajasthan United FC finally tasted victory in the 2025–26 I-League season after a nail-biting 3-2 win over Namdhari Sports Academy at Vidhyadhar Nagar Stadium kept fans on the edge of their seats until the very last second. French star Amadou Soukouna became the hero of the hour, scoring a clinical winner during injury time to break the deadlock.

The home side started with high energy and found their rhythm early. In the 13th minute, Soukouna pounced on a defensive mistake following a long ball to slot home the opener. Rajasthan looked comfortable and doubled their lead in the 57th minute. This time, Pedro Astray was the quickest to react, calmly tucking away a rebound inside the box. At 2-0, the game seemed safely tucked away for the hosts.

However, Namdhari staged a brave late comeback that stunned the local crowd. Manvir Singh sparked hope in the 83rd minute by beating the offside trap to score. Just as the clock hit the 90-minute mark, Najib Ibrahim found the net to level the game at 2-2. It felt like a heartbreaking draw for Rajasthan, but Soukouna had other plans. In a final surge during stoppage time, he rose highest to head home the winning goal.

This vital victory pushes Rajasthan United up to fourth place in the standings with four points. Meanwhile, Namdhari remains in ninth place. It was a classic display of grit and never-say-die spirit from the Jaipur-based club.



India storms into final against fierce England

HYDERABAD

The Indian women's hockey team has marched into the grand final of the FIH World Cup Qualifiers after a gritty performance. Playing at the G.M.C. Balayogi Ground, the home heroes secured a hard-fought 1-0 victory over a stubborn Italian side. The match remained a tense deadlock for the first half, with India creating several scoring chances through penalty corners. Captain Salima Tete and star forward Navneet Kaur kept the Italian defense under constant pressure throughout the opening periods.

The breakthrough finally arrived in the 40th minute when Manisha Chauhan found the back of the net. Her clinical strike proved to be the winner, sparking celebrations across the stadium. India will now face England in the tournament's final match. England earned their spot earlier in the day by defeating Scotland 2-0, thanks to goals from Lottie Bingham and Darcy Bourne. Both teams are now eyeing the championship trophy in what promises to be an electric showdown between two top-tier international rivals.

In the classification matches for lower rankings, Uruguay dominated Austria with a convincing 3-0 win. Manuela Vilar opened the scoring early, while Teresa Viana added a double to seal the result. Meanwhile, Wales pulled off a tight 2-1 victory against South Korea, led by two crucial goals from their captain, Elizabeth Bingham. As the tournament reaches its climax, all eyes are on the Indian Eves. They have shown incredible heart and defensive discipline, proving they are ready to fight for the ultimate glory on home soil.

Triple jumpers take center stage in Bengaluru

BENGALURU

The National Open Jumps Competition is set to electrify Bengaluru, with the men's triple jump taking the spotlight. As the first major track and field event of the 2026 season, the meet serves as a vital proving ground for athletes eyeing the Commonwealth and Asian Games. While some big names have withdrawn, the field remains packed with elite talent ready to soar at the Anju Bobby High Performance Centre.

National record holder Praveen Chithravel is the man to watch. Having leaped a massive 17.37 meters previously, he enters the competition as the heavy favorite. He faces stiff competition from Abdulla Aboobacker, the 2022 Commonwealth Games silver medalist. However, the triple jump field is missing defending champion Eldhose Paul, who is currently recovering from knee surgery. Their rivalry is expected to be the highlight of the two-day event.

The long jump category saw a string of last-minute exits. High-profile stars like Shaili Singh and Jeswin Aldrin opted out earlier, but the biggest blow came when Murali Sreeshankar withdrew due to viral fever. The 26-year-old now hopes to return for the Indian Athletics Series in April. Despite these absences, fans can still cheer for high jump ace Sarvesh Anil Kushare and pole vault sensation Dev Meena, who recently pushed the national record to 5.40 meters.

For these athletes, every centimeter counts. This meet is not just about medals; it is about finding the rhythm needed for a grueling international calendar. Bengaluru's thin air and passionate crowd provide the perfect backdrop for these stars to begin their journey toward global glory.

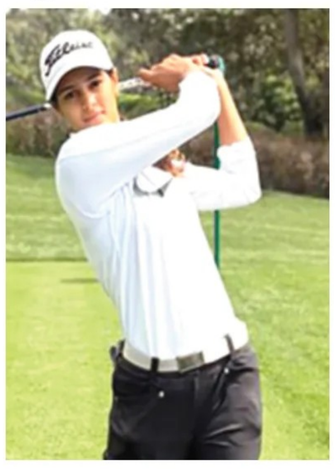
Amateur star Lavanya Gupta wins golf title

GURUGRAM

In a stunning display of skill, amateur golfer Lavanya Gupta outshined the professionals to win the fifth leg of the Women's Pro Golf Tour. Competing at the prestigious DLF Golf and Country Club, the young talent maintained her composure through three tough rounds. She finished with a total score of 1-over 217, securing a dominant five-shot victory. Her consistent play throughout the week proved that she belongs among the very best in the sport.

The final day was far from easy, as difficult course conditions tested every player's nerves. Lavanya started her round with six straight pars, showing great discipline. Even after a double bogey on the tenth hole, she did not panic. Instead, she stayed calm and leaned on her steady technique to protect her lead. While her rivals struggled to keep up, Lavanya's ability to bounce back from mistakes was the key to her success on the green.

Professional golfers Durga Nittur and Jasmine Shekar both finished tied for second place with a score of 6-over 222. Both players had strong starts but unfortunately lost momentum during the final stretch of the match. Meanwhile, seasoned pro Amandeep Drall took the fourth spot. The tournament featured 57 talented participants competing for a total prize purse of Rs 18 lakh. With this win, the amateur star has sent a clear message to the field. The tour now moves to the Jaypee Wishtown Golf Course, where the next exciting battle begins on March 17.



Brijesh and Hack grasp lead in Ahmedabad

AHMEDABAD

The leaderboard is tightening up at the Kalhaar Blues and Greens Golf Club as the Indorama Ventures Open hits its midpoint. Brijesh Kumar and American pro Jhared Hack moved into a shared lead after a gripping second round. Both golfers sit at seven-under 137, showing remarkable consistency under pressure. Brijesh climbed the ranks with a solid three-under 69, while Hack stayed steady with a two-under 70 to keep his nose in front alongside his rival.

Brijesh provided the highlight of the day on the very last hole. After a round featuring five birdies, he sank a spectacular 20-foot putt on the 18th to finish with a flourish. His calm approach helped him overcome two bogeys earlier in the day.

Meanwhile, Hack relied on his power, picking up crucial birdies on the par-5 holes to maintain his momentum. Both players admitted feeling confident as they head into the weekend, knowing the margin for error is razor-thin.

Just one shot behind the leaders is India's Dhruv Sheoran, who occupies third place alone at six-under. A dense pack of four golfers, including international stars Clement Sordet and Pierre Pineau, are tied for fourth. It was a tougher day for early leader Rashid Khan, who tumbled down the standings after carding a 74.

CHINNASWAMY STADIUM has passed the IPL safety test

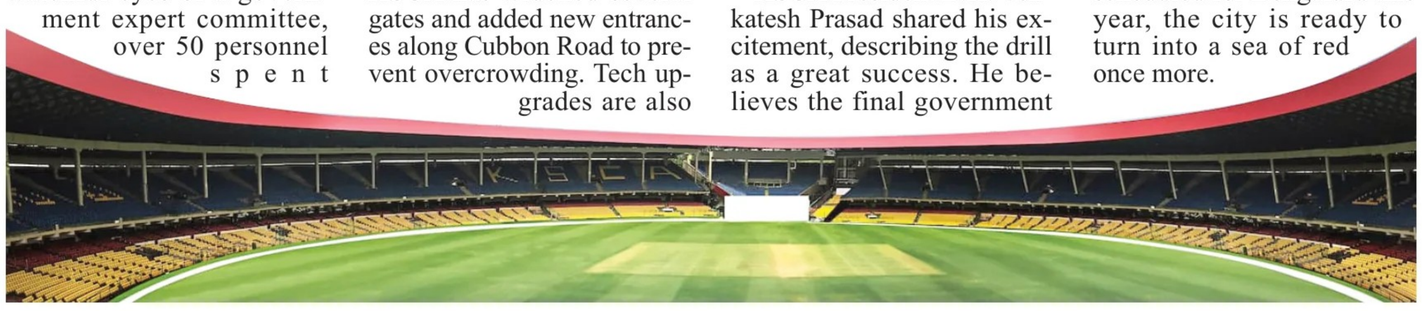
M. Chinnaswamy Stadium gears up for IPL 2026 as KSCA completes successful security drill ahead of RCB's return

BENGALURU

The M. Chinnaswamy Stadium is buzzing with life again as it nears a long-awaited return to the IPL spotlight. The Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) conducted a major mock drill to prove the venue is safe and ready for the 2026 season. Under the watchful eyes of a government expert committee, over 50 personnel spent hours testing new crowd-control measures and security upgrades. This rehearsal is a crucial step toward hosting the defending champions, Royal Challengers Bengaluru, later this month.

The stadium has undergone a massive transformation to ensure fan safety. In response to previous concerns, the KSCA has widened several gates and added new entrances along Cubbon Road to prevent overcrowding. Tech upgrades are also a highlight, with the number of surveillance cameras jumping from 160 to a whopping 500. Officials have also mapped out clear emergency exits and partnered with local hospitals for quick medical support. Most major work is now finished, with only small tasks like putting up signs remaining.

KSCA President B.K. Venkatesh Prasad shared his excitement, describing the drill as a great success. He believes the final government approval, expected on March 16, is now just a formality. The timing is perfect, as the RCB stars are set to arrive at the ground tomorrow to begin their training camp. The stadium's first big test comes on March 28, when RCB takes on Sunrisers Hyderabad in the season opener. With five home games scheduled for Bengaluru this year, the city is ready to turn into a sea of red once more.



IRFAN PATHAN hints at Dhoni's final dance

NEW DELHI

Irfan Pathan hints that the 2026 IPL may be MS Dhoni's final season, with CSK focusing on mentorship while the legend continues to inspire on and off-field

Is the legendary "Thala" finally ready to hang up his gloves? Former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan believes the upcoming 2026 IPL season could be the final time we see MS Dhoni in the iconic yellow jersey. At 44, Dhoni has already arrived at the Chennai Super Kings training camp, working closely with captain Ruturaj Gaikwad. Pathan suggested that while Dhoni remains as fit as ever, his role this year might shift toward a master mentor.

Speaking on the 'Game Plan' show, Pathan noted that CSK feels incomplete without Dhoni's presence. He expects the veteran to focus on grooming the next generation of stars, including young talents like Ayush Mhatre and the newly traded Sanju Samson. The goal is simple: ensure the leadership baton is passed smoothly while chasing a record-breaking sixth title. Even if his on-field minutes decrease, his wisdom in the dugout will be the team's greatest weapon.

With 278 matches and 5,439 runs under his belt, Dhoni's legacy is already set in stone.

Last season, he mostly thrilled fans with quick-fire cameos in the final overs, but CSK CEO Kasi Viswanathan recently confirmed that the legend is available for every single game in 2026.

Whether he plays as a keeper or an impact sub, the excitement in Chennai is reaching a fever pitch. As the season opener on March 28 approaches, every fan is savoring what could be the final chapters of cricket's most beloved story.

Indian racer to tackle Nurburgring in Porsche

NURBURG

Indian speedster Akshay Gupta is shifting his career into high gear this season. The 33-year-old from Ahmedabad has officially stepped up to the elite GT4 category for the 2026 Nurburgring Langstrecken-Serie (NLS). Trading his previous production-class machinery for a powerful Porsche Cayman GT4 CS, Gupta has joined the highly respected Sorg Rennsport team. This move marks a significant milestone as he becomes the only Indian driver to compete in the full championship for three straight years.

Gupta will race in the Cup3 class, a category famous for having the largest and most competitive fields in endurance racing. Since all cars in this class are identical, the outcome depends purely on driver skill and strategy. After securing six podiums and two wins over the last three seasons, Gupta feels ready for the challenge. He will share the cockpit with German drivers Darian Donkel and Aaron Wenisch, aiming to clinch the Pro-AM championship title.

The season kicks off today at the legendary "Green Hell" circuit in Germany. This year's series is extra special, with Formula 1 champion Max Verstappen also set to compete in later rounds. For Gupta, the 2026 calendar includes ten grueling races, highlighted by the world-famous Nurburgring 24 Hours in May.

Indian youth boxers clinch five big medals

BANGKOK

India's youth boxing stars have guaranteed themselves at least five medals at the World Boxing Futures Cup in Thailand. A series of explosive quarter-final wins during the matches has paved the way for the national team to reach the semi-finals. Leading the charge, Gunjan dominated Azerbaijan's Gular Huseynova with a 5-0 unanimous victory in the 48kg category. Her teammate Joyshree Devi was equally impressive, forcing the referee to stop her match against Japan's Yura Kanemaru in the very first round.

The men's division also saw success as Ambekar Meetei battled through a tough 4-1 win over Japan's Akira Uekubo. Later in the evening, Chandrika Pujari showcased her power by stopping her Spanish opponent in the second round, while Radhamani Longjam outclassed England's Siobhan Haley with a smart 4-1 performance. While Sahil Duhan faced a narrow loss to France, the five remaining Indian boxers have already secured bronze and are now fighting to upgrade their medals to gold.

This tournament is a vital training ground for young athletes born between 2008 and 2009. It offers high-level international experience and serves as a major step toward the Youth Olympic Games in Dakar later this year. With the semi-finals starting today, the Indian camp is confident and full of energy. These young warriors are not just winning matches; they are proving that India's boxing future is in very safe hands. Every punch thrown in Bangkok is bringing them closer to global recognition and hometown pride.

Call to support non-cricket sports at grassroots

NEW DELHI

Minister of State Raksha Khadse has issued a powerful call to diversify India's sporting culture. Speaking at the Golden Jubilee of the Sports Journalists Federation of India (SJFI), she urged the media to give non-cricket sports more recognition. Addressing a large gathering at the Major Dhyan Chand Stadium, Khadse emphasized that strengthening talent at the grassroots level is essential for India's future as a global sporting powerhouse.

The four-day convention, hosted by the Delhi Sports Journalist Association, returns to the capital after over twenty years. Khadse praised journalists for their role in inspiring the younger generation and shaping the nation's sports culture. She highlighted that media coverage helps families understand how children can build careers in emerging fields like sports science and sports tourism. By shining a light on lesser-known disciplines, journalists act as a bridge between government initiatives and hidden talent in rural areas.

Khadse also stressed the importance of women's participation in sports journalism, calling the profession a critical pillar of democracy. The event, attended by Sports Secretary Hari Ranjan Rao, included a traditional lamp-lighting ceremony and the unveiling of prestigious trophies for inter-zonal competitions.

DSJA President Abhishek Tripathi thanked the Sports Ministry for their support in organizing the massive event after a twenty-three-year gap. As the convention continues, the focus remains clear: it is time to look beyond the cricket pitch and celebrate every athlete who wears the national colors.

Teen star dominates Maharashtra table tennis auction

MUMBAI

The Butterfly Table Tennis Super League Maharashtra 2026 auction concluded with a mix of veteran experience and youthful energy. Teenage sensation Divyanshi Bhowmick stole the headlines for the second year running, becoming the most expensive player. Joining Mumbai Mozartt for Rs 73,000, the Asian Youth gold medallist proved that age is no barrier to value in this professional league. Meanwhile, Jash Modi followed closely behind, secured by Bayside Spinners TTC for a impressive Rs 71,000.

Defending champions Phantom Stars made a statement of intent by signing Commonwealth Games gold medallist Sanil Shetty for Rs 69,500. His veteran presence is expected to anchor their title defense. Other significant deals included Reeth Rishya joining PBG Pune Jaguars and Shouren Soman moving to NPV Smashers, both for Rs 61,500. Even the new teams showed ambition, with Jolly Friends Sports Club picking up legend Madhurika Patkar for Rs 51,500 to lead their debut season.

Eight teams utilized a Rs 2.5 lakh purse to build balanced squads across six categories, from U-13 boys to veterans. The tournament, scheduled from April 30 to May 3, features a unique format where every game won earns a team point.

BUTTERFLY TTSL TABLE TENNIS SUPER LEAGUE MAHARASHTRA

Indian women's cricket participation doubles in years

NEW DELHI

A groundbreaking study by the BBC and Collective Newsroom reveals that women's participation in cricket has doubled across India since 2020. Surveying fourteen states, researchers found that ten percent of women now play the sport, up from just five percent four years ago. The growth is even more explosive among young women aged fifteen to twenty-four, where participation skyrocketed from six percent to sixteen percent. In states like Uttar Pradesh, the number of female players surged tenfold, proving that the "gentleman's game" is rapidly becoming everyone's game.

The rise of the Women's Premier League (WPL) has played a massive role in this shift. Viewership for professional women's cricket nearly doubled, with audiences now following the national team out of genuine pride rather than just a general interest in sports. Furthermore, one in four young women now views sports as a viable career path. While cricket leads the way, badminton is also gaining ground in states like Punjab and Telangana.

However, the report highlights that hurdles still remain. Roughly thirteen percent of women avoid sports due to safety concerns, and many still cite a lack of time as a major barrier. Shockingly, the study noted a slight increase in regressive stereotypes regarding the appearance of female athletes. Editor-in-Chief Rupa Jha noted that while the data shows inspiring progress, these social barriers require urgent action. As India celebrates its sporting heroes, this study proves that the next generation of girls is ready to step onto the pitch and change history.

Teenager becomes the youngest pole sitter in F1 history

SHANGHAI

Italian sensation Kimi Antonelli made Formula One history by becoming the youngest driver ever to secure a pole position. At just 19 years old, the Mercedes rookie delivered a stunning performance during qualifying for the Chinese Grand Prix. He clocked a lap that was 0.222 seconds faster than his teammate and championship leader, George Russell. This victory shatters the long-standing record held by Sebastian Vettel, who was 21 when he set the mark in 2008.

The session was a rollercoaster for the Mercedes team. While Antonelli remained calm and precise, George Russell faced a mechanical nightmare. His car stopped on the track during the final phase due to battery and gearbox issues. However, his mechanics pulled off a miracle to get him back out for one last lap, allowing him to secure second place for a front-row lockout. Russell described the result as "damage limitation" after a stressful afternoon.

Behind the Mercedes duo, Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton took third place, while Charles Leclerc followed in fourth. The McLaren pair of Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris will start fifth and sixth. It was a rough day for reigning champion Max Verstappen, who could only manage eighth for Red Bull. Meanwhile, the Williams team struggled significantly, with Alex Albon expressing his deep frustration over the radio. As the grid prepares for Sunday's race, all eyes are on the teenage star Antonelli to see if he can turn this historic pole into a maiden victory.

Pakistan cricket board denies fining WC stars

LAHORE

The Pakistan Cricket Board has stepped forward to clear the air regarding rumors about their national team. Despite the disappointment of the squad's early exit from the T20 World Cup, officials confirmed that no players have been forced to pay fines for their performance on the field.

The news comes after several reports circulated claiming that every player was hit with a massive bill of five million rupees. However, PCB spokesperson Amir Mir spoke to the media to shut down these claims. He explained that while the board is unhappy about the team missing the semifinals, they are not taking money back from the athletes at this time.

Instead of punishment, the board is looking at how to handle future rewards. Currently, top players earn a significant amount of money through their central contracts and match fees. Between sponsorship deals and a share of international revenue, a player can make nearly seven crore rupees. The board wants to ensure that these big incentives are better tied to how well the team actually plays during major tournaments.

Mr. Mir noted that the goal is to make players more accountable, but he stressed that no final decisions have been made. The board remains focused on supporting the squad while they figure out a fair formula for the future. For now, the players can breathe a sigh of relief as they head home. While their trophy cabinet might be empty this year, their bank accounts remain untouched as the board focuses on improvement rather than penalties.

Inside the Coastal Mansion of Rishab Shetty

A Blend of Culture, Luxury, and Cinema

Popular actor and filmmaker Rishab Shetty, best known for the film Kantara, lives in a beautiful coastal mansion in Kundapura, Karnataka. The property, reportedly worth around Rs 12 crore, stands amid green landscapes and is located close to the famous Maravanthe Beach along the Arabian Sea. The house originally belonged to Shetty's great-grand-uncle and has been carefully restored while preserving the family's traditional style.

Visitors entering the mansion are welcomed by wide laterite steps and large Burma-teak doors that highlight coastal architecture. A brass temple bell hangs near the entrance adding a spiritual touch. At the centre of the home is a skylit atrium where a massive granite tulasi katta weighing about 300 kilograms stands proudly. The space is decorated with Yakshagana headgear and film memorabilia and meaningful props from Shetty's life and career. Among them are a rifle prop used in Kantara and a cricket bat signed by Yuvraj Singh. These items quietly tell the story of the actor's journey from coastal Karnataka to national fame.

The mansion also includes several creative spaces. One of the most unusual is the Rain Room designed with glass walls and a simulated rainfall atmosphere. Shetty often uses this quiet setting to think about stories and write film scripts. The house further features a private screening room with comfortable Italian leather recliners facing a large 150-inch retractable screen supported by Dolby Atmos sound system.

The projector in the room has been playfully named Seleyaraya after the forest spirit from Kantara. Outside the house a garage holds several vehicles including an Audi Q7, Mahindra Thar, Jeep Compass and a Royal Enfield Classic 350 motorcycle. Interestingly their horns are tuned to local folk music. Close to the residence stands Shetty's production facility set up in a renovated rice mill where new film projects are developed.

RajKummar Rao, Keerthy Suresh Team Up For Thriller Raftaar

Actors Rajkummar Rao and Keerthy Suresh are set to share screen space in an upcoming thriller-drama titled Raftaar. The film was officially announced on Saturday by Amazon MGM Studios through its social media platform. According to the announcement, the film is expected to release in theatres on July 24, 2026.

The makers describe Raftaar as a gripping and intense drama that will keep audiences on the edge of their seats. The story unfolds in the highly competitive education industry and revolves around a rapidly growing start-up. It focuses on the lives of two ambitious individuals whose dreams of success slowly begin to clash.

As the company expands and gains attention, the pressure of money, power, and influence starts affecting their personal and professional lives. The relationship between the two central characters is tested as they struggle to balance ambition, trust, and rivalry in a demanding environment.

The film is directed by Aditya Nimbalkar and produced by Patralekhaa under the banner of Kampa Film. The story and screenplay have been written by Rohan Narula, while Tarun Bali serves as the executive producer.

Apart from Rao and Suresh, the movie features a strong supporting cast including Anurag Thakur, Rohan Verma, Tanya Maniktala and Rajat Kapoor in important roles. The makers have not yet revealed further details about the storyline or production schedule.

Meanwhile, Rajkummar Rao has several upcoming projects. He will soon appear in Nikam, a film based on the life of noted public prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam. Keerthy Suresh was last seen in the Telugu film Revolver Rita, directed by J.K. Chandru. The film also featured Radhika Sarathkumar, Sunil, Ajay Ghosh and John Vijay in key roles.

Couple Friendly Now Streaming On Amazon Prime Video

The Telugu romantic drama Couple Friendly has officially arrived on the OTT platform Amazon Prime Video after completing its theatrical run. The film was originally released in cinemas on February 14 to coincide with Valentine's Day and has now become available for streaming for audiences at home.

Directed by debutant Ashwin Chandrasekar, the movie stars Santosh Sobhan and Manasa Varanasi in the lead roles. The film focuses on the modern-day challenges faced by young couples trying to balance love, careers and personal ambitions.

The story is set mainly in Chennai and follows Siva, a young man from Nellore who moves to the city to build a career in interior design. During his journey, he meets Mithra, an independent and ambitious professional woman.

Carmeni Selvam Telugu Teaser Highlights *Money, Family, and Ambition*

The teaser of the upcoming Telugu film Carmeni Selvam has been released, offering a glimpse into a contemporary drama focused on money, family, and modern ambitions. Produced by Pathway Productions, the film features a strong ensemble cast including Samuthirakani, Gautham Vasudev Menon, Lakshmi Priyaa Chandramouli and Abhinaya. The teaser suggests a story that reflects how people chase success and deal with financial pressures in modern life.

The teaser begins with a voiceover by Samuthirakani saying there are many ways to make money. Soon after, different voices present conflicting ideas about wealth and success. Some encourage overspending, others suggest taking bold loans or investing in cryptocurrency, while a few even hint at risky shortcuts. These dialogues present a humorous but sharp look at how society today views money and success.

Rather than delivering a serious message, the teaser maintains a light tone with irony and humour. It hints that the story may explore how financial choices and responsibilities shape the lives of ordinary people in a world driven by loans, credit cards and EMI payments.

The visuals show Samuthirakani as a family man living with his wife, played by Lakshmi Priyaa Chandramouli, and their young son. However, a few scenes show him alone in a foreign location, raising curiosity about his journey and personal struggles. Meanwhile, the presence of Gautham Vasudev Menon in an undisclosed role adds further intrigue to the narrative.

The teaser ends with a striking line from Samuthirakani advising that those who want to appear rich should spend like the wealthy, even if they must borrow money to do so.

The film is written and directed by Ram Chakri, with cinematography by Yuvaraj Dakshan and music by Music Cloud Technologies. Carmeni Selvam is scheduled to release in theatres on April 3, 2026.

Ustaad Bhagat Singh Gets Benefit Shows, Ticket Price Hike

The upcoming Telugu film Ustaad Bhagat Singh starring Pawan Kalyan is set for a grand theatrical release on March 19. Ahead of its release, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has granted permission for special benefit shows and a temporary increase in ticket prices during the film's opening days.

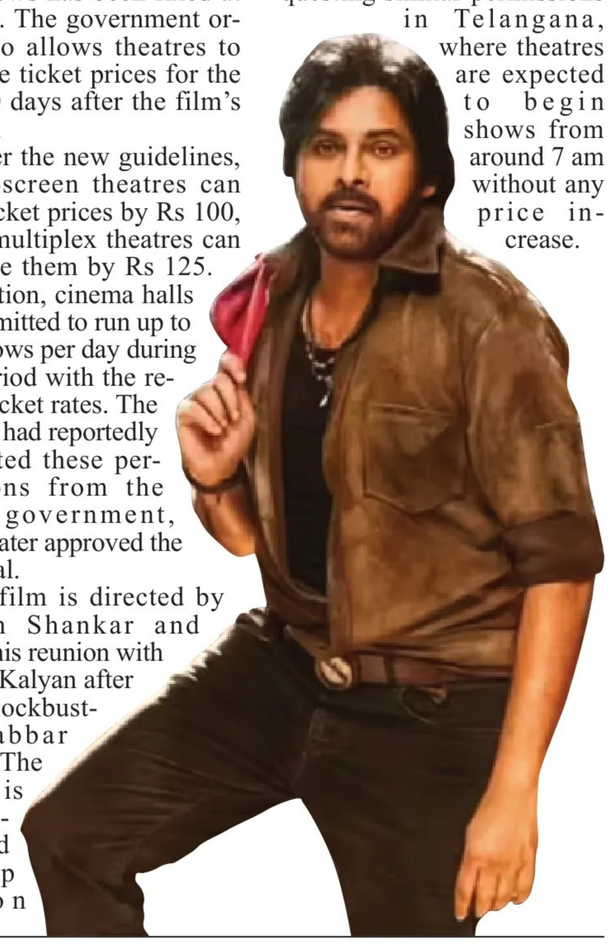
According to reports, theatres in Andhra Pradesh can screen early morning benefit shows starting around 4 am or 5 am on the day of release. The ticket price for these special shows has been fixed at Rs 500. The government order also allows theatres to increase ticket prices for the first 10 days after the film's release.

Under the new guidelines, single-screen theatres can raise ticket prices by Rs 100, while multiplex theatres can increase them by Rs 125. In addition, cinema halls are permitted to run up to five shows per day during this period with the revised ticket rates. The makers had reportedly requested these permissions from the state government, which later approved the proposal.

The film is directed by Harish Shankar and marks his reunion with Pawan Kalyan after their blockbuster Gabbar Singh. The movie is described as a cop action thriller and features Sreeleela and Raashii Khanna as the female leads.

The film is also expected to face competition at the box office from Dhurandhar: The Revenge starring Ranveer Singh and directed by Aditya Dhar.

Meanwhile, the situation in Telangana remains uncertain regarding ticket price hikes. In the past, the Telangana High Court had struck down a government order allowing ticket hikes for the film They Call Him OG. Because of that ruling, makers may avoid requesting similar permissions in Telangana, where theatres are expected to begin shows from around 7 am without any price increase.



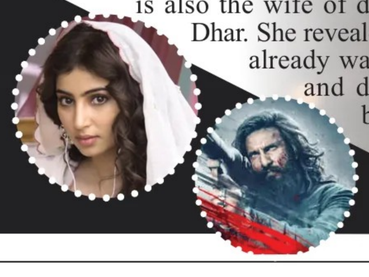
Dhurandhar 2 Early Reviews Spark Debate Among *Ranveer* Fans

Alleged early reviews of the upcoming film Dhurandhar: The Revenge have gone viral on social media, creating excitement and confusion among movie lovers. The film, directed by Aditya Dhar and starring Ranveer Singh in the lead role, is scheduled to release later this week and has already generated massive buzz online.

In recent days, several posts claiming to be the first reviews of the film have circulated widely. One viral message described the movie as the Baahubali 2 of this era, comparing it with the blockbuster Baahubali 2: The Conclusion. Another post gave the film a four-star rating and praised Ranveer Singh's performance, claiming he appears in beast mode throughout the movie with intense screen presence.

However, many fans quickly questioned the authenticity of these reactions. Several social media users pointed out that the film has not yet received certification from the Central Board of Film Certification, making it unlikely that anyone outside the team has watched the movie. Fans also noted that official preview screenings have not yet taken place, which further raised doubts about the credibility of the circulating reviews.

Many supporters of Ranveer Singh warned others not to trust unverified posts and labelled them as fake reviews created to gain attention online. Comments questioning how viewers could watch the film before its certification quickly spread across social media platforms. So far, the only person who has publicly shared a reaction to the film is actress Yami Gautam, who is also the wife of director Aditya Dhar. She revealed that she had already watched the film and described it as beyond extraordinary.



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